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# FROM HELIGOLAND TO KEELING ISLAND

ONE HUNDRED DAYS OF NAVAL WAR

BY

ARCHIBALD HURD

Author of "Command of the Sea," "Naval Efficiency,"  
"German Sea Power: Its Rise, Progress, and Economic  
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# CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
INTRODUCTION - - - -	9
I. GERMAN MINES AND THEIR VICTIMS -	41
II. THE ELUSIVE "GOEBEN" - - -	58
III. THE BATTLE IN THE BIGHT - -	67
IV. THE HUMAN FACTOR - - -	81
V. ROUNDING-UP THE COMMERCE RAIDERS	93
VI. END OF GERMANY'S COLONIAL EMPIRE	122
VII. THE DEBUT OF THE SUBMARINE -	138
VIII. THE HEROES OF THE "PEGASUS" -	164
IX. THE NAVAL BRIGADE AT ANTWERP -	170
X. EXPLOITS OF NAVAL AIRMEN - -	178
XI. BRITISH NAVY V. GERMAN ARMY	186
XII. SWEEPING THE SEAS - - -	197
XIII. THE ACTION IN THE PACIFIC - -	207



# FROM HELIGOLAND TO KEELING ISLAND

## • TRIUMPHS OF BRITISH SEA POWER

PROBABLY nine out of ten people in the United Kingdom believed that a war between ourselves and Germany would be marked in its earliest days by a naval battle in the North Sea in which the British Fleet, though suffering some loss—probably heavy loss—would be victorious, and that the whole business, so far as the sea was concerned, would then be practically at an end.

No naval battle has occurred. To students of naval history this apparent inactivity of the naval forces of the two countries has occasioned no surprise. Must we therefore conclude that British sea power has been ineffective: that we have reaped no moral or material advantage from the heavy expenditure which was made upon the Fleet from year to year, and that we could have used the money to better purpose had we spent it in expanding our military power so as to enable us to take a more prominent part

## 10 Heligoland to Keeling Island

in the successive battles which have been fought on the Continent ?

There is a tendency to forget that we cannot use any military power on the Continent or elsewhere outside these islands unless we possess a permanent, or at least a temporary, command of the sea. The British Army on the Continent exists in virtue of the guarantee of safe sea communications which the British Fleet has hitherto been enabled to give. The matter is fundamental, and it is well that it should receive due prominence at a moment when there is a tendency to deplore that we had not a larger army to throw across the Channel to support the cause of freedom.

The youngest amongst us can recall the difficulty which the naval authorities experienced during the past few years in securing sufficient money to maintain a reasonable margin of safety on the sea. We were devoting over £80,000,000 a year to our defences and most people thought the amount far too large. If there had been any reduction in the naval preparations, a corresponding increase in our military forces would have availed us nothing. This is a truth which is frequently forgotten. We should not have been in a position, in the absence of a fleet of unchallengeable supremacy, to transport the Army, however large and efficient, across the Channel. Once our sea command was seriously threatened, the Army would have shared, with the civil population, all the privations which must afflict a maritime people, dependent on overseas supplies, when it had lost the right

of free passage over the world's waters. Unless the Navy had been in a position in August and succeeding months to give a certificate of safety to the Army, no government would have had the hardihood to transport our soldiers to the Continent.

It may seem a surprising statement to those who are unfamiliar with naval history, but it is none the less true, that in the record of naval warfare never has sea power achieved such consummate victories in so short a period as the British Navy has achieved since the outbreak of war on August 4th. From time to time in the *Daily Telegraph* I have referred to these silent victories of the British Fleet. It is not necessary to repeat those statements in this volume. It is always more interesting to learn the truth from an impartial quarter. It may, perhaps, have been thought that there has been too great a tendency on the part of those who have commented upon the progress of the sea affair, to take a roseate view of the course of events. Whether this be a fact or not may be judged from the following interesting statement, reviewing the work of the British Navy during the present war, which has been published in the *Army and Navy Journal*, one of the leading expert journals of the United States:

"The unwillingness of the main fleet of the German Navy to continue its status of inertness, so marked in the early stages of the war, an unwillingness attested by the recent attacks upon British cruisers with



## 12 Heligoland to Keeling Island

submarines, is doubtless the result of a growing realisation by the Germans of the advantages which Great Britain has obtained by her command of the sea, for one of the most striking illustrations of the truth of Admiral Mahan's frequent references in his works to the relation of sea power to successful empire is afforded by the British Navy thus far in the present war. Without its predominance, the condition of the 'tight little island' might indeed challenge the sympathy of the nations at peace, for with the command of the sea, Germany ere this might have been able to land a considerable army on English soil and carry the war into the very heart of the United Kingdom. The inability to hold the sea has compelled Germany to sit down, as it were, and see troops brought from every quarter of the globe to attack her without the power to lift a hand to make successful opposition."

Having thus broken the ground, the American journal continues:

"Thanks to her overwhelming control of the sea, thus far, Great Britain has been able to send over the Channel to France an army of several hundred thousands without the loss of a single man in transit, although the German Fleet has been only a few miles away, comparatively speaking. From India have been brought thousands of the best British and native troops to strengthen the

lines of the Allies in north-eastern France, and not a soldier has been lost in these long voyages. From Canada and Australia, also, have come thousands for the 'Allies' firing line, and all have reached their posts of duty without a single mishap. If this were all, the British Navy would have justified all that had been claimed for it before the war.

"But it has done still more. It has practically kept open the ports of the Empire everywhere, while closing the ports of Germany. The oversea commerce of Great Britain still goes on, except where an occasional capture is made by a German cruiser like the "Emden" or the "Karlsruhe." The danger of a British famine, from the stoppage of food imports, no longer disturbs the imagination of Englishmen, in view of the dominance of the British Fleet. Its war vessels, moreover, have been able to take part in the land operations of the Allies, by shelling the line of the Germans along the Belgian coast, it being noted that this required the service of the despised monitor. Whatever damage has been inflicted upon the British Fleet in home waters has been done by mines and submarine sorties by the shut-in German naval forces, much in the manner that a sortie may inflict damage upon a besieging army without in any material sense affecting the ultimate decision. The minor cruisers that have been destroyed by German torpedoes mean less

## 14 Heligoland to Keeling Island

of a loss than would the destruction of so many destroyers or submarines, for their service can be only that of scouts."

But there are other aspects of the triumph of British sea power to which this journal of the United States directs attention :

"What the Navy has done for British commerce—kept the ocean trade lanes open—it has prohibited to German foreign commerce. The huge German liners float as idly at their berths to-day in the docks at New York as they did early in August, while nearly every day an English steamship comes gaily up the bay and river, flying the Union Jack as proudly as if war did not exist. The ports of London, Liverpool, Southampton, Bristol, Glasgow—all are doing business 'at the same old stand,' but this cannot be said of Hamburg and Bremen, the great German ports. They are closed more completely than were the Southern harbours during the Civil War by the blockading fleets of the North. The wealth of other nations far over the seas is not for Germany, in this war, as long as the present condition of neutralisation persists in her fleet. She must live upon herself. All the money she may be able to raise will not avail her to get a pound of contraband into her ports, except by means of blockade runners, always a precarious and uncertain method of receiving supplies. Thus far we have heard of no successful

running of the British blockade, and it is not easy to see how it is going to develop into anything of moment unless the British Navy is weakened by a general attack."

Having thus surveyed the positive victories of British sea power, this journal—a journal of the United States, let it be remembered, viewing events impartially—continues:

"Great as are these positive achievements of the British Navy, no less weighty are its negative accomplishments. What it has prevented Germany from doing is of the utmost importance to the British nation. Mistress of the seas, who can tell but that already Germany might have had a land force thundering at the gates of London? If not caring to take that risk, Germany could have prevented the landing of any British troops on continental soil, and thus have kept England from coming to the assistance of France.

"Indeed, when one begins to speculate upon what might happen to the British Empire in the event of its fleet's losing command of the seas, the more one is compelled to acknowledge the force of the Mahan doctrine that sea power has been the ultimate factor deciding the fate of empires. That this is so, one has but to imagine the naval positions reversed to see. With the ports of England blockaded as are the German ports, with British merchant vessels tied to

## 16 Heligoland to Keeling Island

neutral or home docks, with Germany carrying her troops hither and yon of the high seas, with Canadian, Australian and Indian ports daily in danger of bombardment from a powerful fleet, and with her army holding its own as at present, who would not give to Germany the winning cards in this great game of national destinies ? ”

These statements represent the unbiassed opinion of American experts, students of naval history, on the work of the British Fleet. This is the character of the record of which future generations will read when we have all passed away, and the events of the past three months are surveyed in their proper perspective. Those who come after us will realise that the victories secured by the British Fleet have been many, and they have been of the greatest possible importance in their bearing upon the ultimate issue of the war. We have not only gained immense advantages, but we have prevented the enemy from using the seas. The effects of our naval pressure are already beginning to be apparent in the economic conditions which are proving an increasing embarrassment to Germany. The war, however, has only just began, and we shall have to wait patiently to reap the full harvest which the British Fleet is preparing for us. In his speech at the Lord Mayor's banquet on November 9th, Mr. Churchill dealt with this subject in a few eloquent sentences :

“ It is very difficult to measure the full effect of naval pressure in the early stages of the war. The

punishment we receive is clear and definite; the punishment we inflict is very often not seen, and even when seen cannot be measured.

"The economic stringency arising from a naval blockade requires time, if it is to reach its full effectiveness. \* We are only looking at it in the third month. But wait a bit. Examine it in the sixth month, in the ninth month, in the twelfth month, and you will begin to see results, results which will be gradually achieved, silently achieved, but which spell the doom of Germany as surely as the approach of winter strikes the leaves from the trees.

"There is another way in which the Navy contributes to the vast decision of this war. It gives to Britain and to the British Empire the time necessary to realise their vast military power. It gives you, my noble friend Lord Kitchener, the time to organise, equip, discipline, arm, and place in the field, a million of men of a quality and power such as have never before been employed in this struggle on the Continent."

Even those among us who readily acknowledge the debt of gratitude which we owe to the Fleet, may inquire how it happened that there has been no naval battle and that, notwithstanding this, the British Navy has been able to fulfil its purpose and keep open the sea communications, not only in Europe, but throughout the world? The circumstance is indeed remarkable, and will repay examination.

During the whole of the period since hostilities opened the armies of five Powers—France, Russia, Great Britain, Germany, and Austria-Hungary\*—

\* The Serbians and Montenegrins were already engaged in hostilities against Austria-Hungary, and, later on, Japan declared war against Germany.

## 18 Heligoland to Keeling Island

have been engaged in a succession of battles of great, if not first-class, importance. Vast masses of troops have been sweeping backwards and forwards over Eastern and Western Europe, leaving scenes of desolation and misery in their train. Slowly, but surely, these armies have been remaking the map of Europe. On the other hand, the main fleets have apparently been inactive—or nearly so. No small section of the inhabitants of the United Kingdom have certainly experienced a sense of disappointment in consequence. This sense of disappointment is traceable to a misunderstanding of the radical differences which exist between military and naval power.

As I have remarked elsewhere,\* when the war opened, Germany and Austria-Hungary instantly took the offensive on land. This on the one hand. No sooner was the mobilisation of the armies of France, Russia, Belgium, and Great Britain completed, than it was assumed that news would soon reach us of more or less decisive engagements. This anticipation was realised. It rested upon the knowledge that each of these six armies had been created and mobilised for the purpose of invading the enemy's territory—and at least defending its own—and by means of conquest forcing from a foe terms of peace which he would not concede except under pressure.

Almost from the day on which hostilities became general in Central Europe, familiar frontiers went for nothing. The boundaries of peace are artificial. They correspond neither with racial

\* *Fortnightly Review*, November. 1914.

nor religious divisions ; they are all the results of past wars. As soon as the peace was broken these frontiers ceased to have any permanent significance, because each of the Great Powers on the Continent entered upon war determined to do its best to change the line of demarcation between itself and neighbouring states. In no single case did a country submit to invasion without making strenuous efforts to resist the advance of the foe—least of all Belgium. The ultimate aims, offensive and defensive, of the Governments of the Great Powers engaged were identical ; they were all inspired with an ambition to hold what they had and, if possible, to wrest from the enemy by force of arms something which they wanted, either in the way of territory, treasure, or political advantage.

On sea the conditions were entirely different. When the war became general Germany faced, on the one hand, the Russian Fleet, growing week by week in strength owing to the completion of new and powerful ships, and the concentrated naval strength of Great Britain on the other ; in the Mediterranean the French Fleet, supported by the British Squadron, confronted the inferior Austro-Hungarian Navy ; in the Far East the naval forces of Japan, with the assistance of the British Squadron in China waters, were opposed to small detachments of German and Austro-Hungarian men-of-war. In the land warfare on the Continent, as has been remarked, no single Power entertained for one moment the idea of voluntarily evacuating its territory and submitting to invasion. This, however, is



## 20 Heligoland to Keeling Island

precisely what our enemies did on the sea. With the exception of a relatively small number of German cruisers, to which reference will be made later on, the great navies of Germany and Austria-Hungary submitted voluntarily to the invasion and control of the seas by the fleets of the Allies. Since war opened not a single battle squadron of either of the enemies has put to sea. There has, therefore, been no possibility of a general naval action either in the North Sea or in the Mediterranean.

We must be on our guard against attributing military importance to incidents such as the sinking of certain British ships.\* The loss of life involved was distressing,\* the loss of the ships—almost all of them obsolescent, if not obsolete—was of little account. We have an immense margin in older ships, and, though the nation has mourned the drowning of so many officers and men, we may, regarding the matter from a purely national point of view, feel some satisfaction that the fighting power of the British Navy during these early weeks of war has not been decreased in the small engagements which have occurred, even to as great an extent as that of Germany.

Our margin of safety at sea has indeed increased since hostilities opened. Instead of the enemy wearing down our superiority, we have increased his inferiority. When the war opened we were almost in the proportion of two to one against

\* In the first three months of the war, the British naval casualties amounted to about 5,768—473 being reported wounded, 968 missing and the remainder (4,327) killed. This total does not include the officers and men interned in Holland.

Germany ; we have not lost even in the proportion of one to one, and we have passed a larger number of new ships into commission. After nearly three months of war we are actually stronger in material than we were, and the chances of the German or Austro-Hungarian fleets endeavouring to resume the use of the sea has decreased. Week succeeds week and we enjoy all the blessings of maritime communication, while the enemies' fleets remain imprisoned. We have every day about 4,000 ships moving on the oceans, engaged in trade ; we have hundreds of transports bringing to our aid the military strength of the distant portions of the Empire ; we have maintained our postal and telegraphic communications with the uttermost parts of the earth. All these benefits the enemies have abandoned ; they have evacuated the seas.

This result is all the more surprising if we bear in mind that the war is of Germany's seeking and that it has followed on a period of fifteen years devoted to the expansion of her naval resources in material and personnel, to the enlargement of her dockyards, to the improvement of her facilities for refreshing and repairing her fleet, and to the construction, and subsequent enlargement, of the great strategic waterway between the Baltic and the North Sea—a vast operation to meet exactly the situation which came into view in the first week in August, when she found herself faced by one enemy on the west and another on the east. The German Navy at the outbreak of war represented the cumulative results of fifteen years of continually increasing naval expenditure.

## 22 Heligoland to Keeling Island

The extent of the sacrifices made by the German people in response to the demands of the Government can only be adequately appreciated if the movement be studied in its financial aspect.\* \* \*

Down to the birth of the naval movement the expenditure upon the German Fleet had averaged about £4,000,000 a year. In 1897 the sum spent was £5,725,000, and then—in 1898—was passed the first of the Navy Acts, the succeeding ones being adopted in 1900, in 1906, in 1908, and in 1912. Under the influence of this legislation—always aiming at a higher standard of strength—the Reichstag voted the following sums :

	£		£
1898	- 6,000,000	1907	- 14,225,000
1899	6,500,000	1908	- 16,490,000
1900	- 7,500,000	1909	- 20,090,000
1901	- 9,500,000	1910	- 20,845,000
1902	- 10,000,000	1911	- 21,720,000
1903	- 10,500,000	1912	- 22,215,000
1904	- 10,000,000	1913	- 23,030,000
1905	- 11,300,000	1914	- 23,284,000
1906	- 12,000,000		

Fifteen years is the effective life which German naval opinion assigns to a battleship or cruiser. The expenditure during this period therefore represents the cost of the effective German Fleet at the time when the war opened. Germany had invested, in other words, £245,000,000. Not all of this money had been raised by taxation, a considerable part being thrown upon her loan account—Germans being convinced that the expenditure would yield rich dividends—and that speedily. On the other hand, under her conscriptive law no provision had to be made out of the Naval Votes

for pensions, and Germany cast upon the Ministry of the Interior the whole of the outlay of about £22,000,000 involved in the building and enlargement of the Kiel Canal. Moreover, her Naval Estimates contained no mention of the large sums spent in steamship subsidies, the steamships being, as the war has proved, auxiliaries of the war fleet. If we take full account of all the various avenues of naval expenditure, revealed and unrevealed, it may safely be assumed that upon the effective German Fleet as it existed when war began an aggregate sum of not less than £300,000,000 had been spent.

\* Statistical calculations of naval strength \* show, in the first place, the progress which Germany made in these fifteen years, in expanding her Fleet in contrast with the growth of the navies of the other Continental Powers —France, Russia and Austria—and how signally she failed, in spite of many favourable factors, to overtake Great Britain. At the outbreak of war she could claim to be, unchallengeably, the second greatest naval Power of the world. In 1909 she ranked only as the third greatest naval Power, the second place being occupied by the United States. Then came the British naval crisis of 1909. Energetic measures were taken in this and subsequent years to increase our margin of safety. Owing to the action of the Admiralty, supported by a minority of the nation, the scales once more were turned to our advantage. Germany attained the second place among the great naval Powers, because the

\* *Vide "The Fleets at War" (Daily Telegraph War Books).*

## 24 Heligoland to Keeling Island

Americans determined on a policy of naval economy, but in the meantime, owing to our unrivalled shipbuilding facilities and resources of officers and men with the sea instinct, we had been enabled to reinforce our supremacy. Consequently in relation to Great Britain, Germany at the outbreak of war was actually weaker on the seas than she was three or four years before.

The experience of war must have proved a heavy disappointment to the members of the German Navy League, numbering 1,200,000 members. They had been led by the Navy Office, with its energetic Press agents, to expect that the German Navy would be of such a strength, and so organised that it would be able to take the offensive, even against the greatest sea Power.

The Navy Act of 1900 specified a ship establishment which was to be attained in 1920. Under successive amendments of the law that ship establishment had been reached, and more than reached, when war occurred, except in one particular—the strength of the foreign service fleet. Germany had actually built and put into commission in the North Sea and Baltic a much larger naval force than it was the intention of the Navy Act of 1900 to create—though that Act provided for a period of twenty years, this increase being the result of later amending Acts.

In the light of this achievement, what were the German people led to anticipate that their Fleet would achieve? We have an official statement of Germany's ambitions, which the Navy Law embodied, in the Memorandum

accompanying the Navy Bill of 1900. This illuminating document was apparently prepared by Grand Admiral von Tirpitz, the Naval Secretary. The first paragraphs are of particular importance in the light of recent events :

“ For the German Empire of to-day the security of its economic development, and especially of its world-trade, is a life question. For this purpose the German Empire needs not only peace on land, but also peace at sea—not, however, peace at any price, but peace with honour, which satisfies its just requirements.

“ A naval war for economic interests, particularly for commercial interests, will probably be of long duration, for the aim of a superior opponent will be all the more completely reached the longer the war lasts. To this must be added that a naval war which, after the destruction or shutting up of the German sea fighting force, was confined to the blockade of the coasts and the capture of merchant ships, would cost the opponent little : indeed, he would, on the contrary, amply cover the expenses of the war by the simultaneous improvement of his own trade.

“ An unsuccessful naval war of the duration of even only a year would destroy Germany's sea trade, and would thereby bring about the most disastrous conditions, first in her economic, and then, as an immediate consequence of that, in her social life.

## 26 Heligoland to Keeling Island

*"Quite apart from the consequences of the possible peace conditions, the destruction of our sea trade during the war could not, even at the close of it, be made good within measurable time, and would thus add to the sacrifices of the war a serious economic depression."*

In this Memorandum of 1900 it was admitted that the Navy Law of 1898 "does not make allowances for the possibility of a naval war with a great naval Power." The original intention had been that "against greater sea Powers the battle fleet would have importance merely as a sortie fleet." Commenting upon this limitation of German naval ambition in 1898, the Memorandum of 1900 added :

*"That is to say, the fleet would have to withdraw into the harbour and there wait for a favourable opportunity for making a sortie. Even if it should obtain a success in such a sortie, it would nevertheless, like the enemy, suffer considerable loss of ships. The stronger enemy could make good his losses, we could not. In war with a substantially superior sea-Power, the Battle Fleet provided for by the Navy Law would render a blockade more difficult, especially in the first phase of the war, but would never be able to prevent it. To subdue it, or, after it has been considerably weakened, to confine it in its own harbour, would always be merely a question of time. So soon as*

this had happened, no great State could be more easily cut off than Germany from all sea intercourse worthy of the name—of her own ships, as also of the ships of neutral Powers. To effect this it would not be necessary to control long stretches of coast, but merely to blockade the few big seaports.

“In the same way as the traffic to the home ports, the German mercantile ships on all the seas of the world would be left to the mercy of an enemy who was more powerful on the sea. Hostile cruisers on the main trade routes, in the Skager Rack, in the English Channel, off the north of Scotland, in the Straits of Gibraltar, at the entrance to the Suez Canal and at the Cape of Good Hope, would render German shipping practically impossible.”

It was in these circumstances that the Navy Bill of 1900 was laid before the Reichstag. Grand Admiral von Tirpitz, in recommending his new and ambitious naval policy to the people of the German Empire, claimed that “for the protection of sea trade and colonies there is only one means—a strong battle fleet.” The Naval Secretary then proceeded to explain exactly what purpose he had in view in proposing as he did to double the German naval establishment as fixed by law two years before :

“It is not necessary that the German Fleet should be as strong as that of the



## 28 Heligoland to Keeling Island

"greatest naval Power, for a great naval Power will not, as a rule, be in a position to concentrate all its striking forces against us. But even if it should succeed in meeting us with considerable superiority of strength, the defeat of a strong German Fleet would so substantially weaken the enemy that, in spite of the victory he might have obtained, his own position in the world would no longer be secured by an adequate fleet,"

These quotations are of peculiar interest in view of the experiences of the present naval war. They reveal the essential and inevitable weakness of German naval policy. The German people in matters of defence are wooden-headed; they lack in particular imagination and the ability for adaptation to circumstances which is the outstanding feature of the British people. They adopted a Navy Law because it seemed to them a sensible, business-like, and methodical procedure. It was assumed that the world would stand still while Germany was preparing her new naval armaments. Grand Admiral von Tirpitz, judging by his memorandum, conjectured that as the British Fleet was in 1900 so it would be in 1914 and subsequent years.

In order to obtain sanction for his Navy Act he created a Press Bureau, which forthwith flooded the German newspapers with inspired articles. They were intended to give the Germans a belief in sea power, and proceeded to attack every Power with a fleet in turn, although attention was devoted principally to the United

Kingdom. In the process of educating the German public, Grand Admiral von Tirpitz educated all the other nations of the world and revealed to them German ambitions and aims. He woke us and our neighbours up by his foolish words—personal or inspired. The result of his Press and Reichstag campaigns was that the naval situation throughout the world underwent changes which the sapient Naval Secretary had not foreseen. Not only were the British people reminded incidentally by the German propaganda of the value of sea power and of the necessity of maintaining a supreme fleet, but the Governments of France, Russia, and Japan—and even the United States—also accepted the warning which the German naval authorities, in their blindness and self-absorption, unconsciously gave of the danger ahead.

The sequel was that, after fifteen years of unparalleled sacrifice of treasure, and after fifteen years of pin-pricking and mail-fisting, Germany realised in a flash, in the early days of August, that she had not only missed "the goal which had been set," but had so aroused the nervous fears of her neighbours that, in the circumstances which came immediately into view, she was relatively little stronger on the sea than she had been when she embarked on her schemes of naval expansion.

Let us examine the facts. In 1898 the British Channel Squadron consisted of only eight first-class battleships, and there was the Reserve Squadron manned with reduced crews and embracing seven old first-class and three old second-

## 30 Heligoland to Keeling Island

class battleships, which cruised once a year. This comprised the strength of the British Fleet in Home waters, and the Channel Squadron spent most of its time off the coasts of Spain and Portugal, and even visited the Mediterranean, where practically all our best ships were concentrated. Grand Admiral von Tirpitz was sufficiently innocent to assume that what was would always be, and hence the assumption that "a great naval Power will not, as a rule, be in a position to bring all its striking forces against us." Not only did the greatest naval Power carry out the concentration which Grand Admiral von Tirpitz had assumed that it would not carry out, but by arrangement with France it was able, soon after the opening of the war, to entrust to Vice-Admiral Boué de Lapeyère the defence of British interests in the Mediterranean. Thus we were in a position to hold the North Sea with practically all our strength, as we do to-day, while France held the Mediterranean with all her strength, as she does to-day, and Japan, in association with our Eastern Fleet, is supreme in the Pacific; and consequently the basis upon which the expansion of the German Fleet had been planned was swept away directly the peace was broken.

During the actual period of war not a single German battleship has put to sea, although, as we know, the Grand Fleet under Admiral Sir John Jellicoe has, time and again, challenged it to action. The Germans have, in fact, considered it wise to cast back to the naval policy of 1898—"the fleet would have to with-

draw into the harbour and there wait for a favourable opportunity for making a sortie." For over three months it has remained inactive. During the whole of this period it has not even assumed "importance merely as a sortie fleet."

The whole fabric represented by German *Welt-politik* has fallen in ruins, despite the £300,000,000 expenditure upon the Navy during the past fifteen years. Without a naval battle, but by the silent pressure of superior force, the British Fleet, supported by the navies of the French Republic and Japan, has removed the foundations on which, with so much enterprise and zeal, Germany has been building for over forty years. While German armies advanced into France and Russia, with what results we now know, the German Fleet, without striking a blow, evacuated the seas. The German Emperor once claimed that he was "Admiral of the Atlantic"; during the whole period of the war British ships—not forgetting heavily laden transports—have been passing freely across this ocean. Prince Henry of Prussia was sent to the Far East in command of "the mailed fist" squadron; despite her Navy, Germany has been rooted out of the Far East; Germany arrogated to herself a sphere of predominating influence in the Pacific; nowhere, despite the Fleet, does the German flag now fly in that part of the world, except in a few marauding cruisers. In one of his most boastful moods the German Emperor declared that "Neptune, with the trident, is a symbol for us that we have new tasks to fulfil since the Empire has been welded together; the trident must be

## 32 Heligoland to Keeling Island

in our fist" ; after a hundred days of war the trident is still in the firm grasp of the British people.

The reason why there has been no naval battle is thus, on a cursory examination of the situation at sea, transparent. While the armies of Germany and Austria-Hungary proceeded to invade the territory of their neighbours, their navies evacuated the seas in face of superior force—save only for the marauding cruisers. They relinquished without a struggle all the advantages which sea command confers. They had claimed, and Germany in particular had claimed, that they had as much right to use the seas as the British people. When the war opened both the enemies abandoned this claim and withdrew their fleets into strongly defended harbours. Without striking a blow the navies of Great Britain and France thus achieved the object for which they were created. If an enemy runs away, leaving his opponent with all the spoils of victory, the latter has certainly no ground for complaint. To take a parallel case on land. Had the German and Austrian armies submissively retired within a few fortified positions, leaving the armies of France, Russia, Belgium, and Great Britain to march through their territories, seizing private and public property, and exercising every possible proprietorial right, no one would have suggested that the military might of these four Powers had been ineffective. This is what has happened at sea. The two navies—German and Austro-Hungarian—have retreated into strongly defended ports, while the

Allied Fleets have exercised all the rights over the great sea routes.

Such bloodless triumph of superior sea power over forces smaller, it is true, but still considerable, constitutes the most remarkable illustration of the value of naval force which history records. One can understand something of the feeling of the people of Germany and Austria-Hungary as week has succeeded week and their main fleets have remained inactive. They had been led to anticipate that when war came they would reap a rich harvest from all the sacrifices they had made on behalf of naval power. Instantly British dominion of the seas was to become a thing of the past. It was regarded as a bare possibility—by the Germans—that in the struggle all their ships might go down, but they consoled themselves with the reflection that their enemy—Great Britain—would suffer such heavy losses that “his own position in the world would no longer be secured by an adequate fleet”; they anticipated, with keen enjoyment, the prospect of the trident, if it did not, as the Emperor hoped, pass into their “fist,” being at least grasped by some other hand than that which had held it for so many centuries.

Such were the alternate aims on which German naval policy was based and which encouraged the German people to spend £300,000,000 upon their Fleet. So far, these anticipations have not been realised, and we may feel increased confidence as the days pass that they never will be realised. So far, neither in the North Sea nor in the Mediterranean have the German and

## 34 Heligoland to Keeling Island

Austro-Hungarian navies achieved a single success which, in its moral or physical aspects, can affect the final outcome of the war. In the outer seas it is also true that no act has been committed by the enemies which can, in the remotest degree, be regarded as of military importance. The "Emden" and a few other roving German cruisers have seized a number of British merchant ships, cut a marine cable, and bombarded a few towns. Owing to the fact that no friendly ports were at hand into which the prizes could be taken, these men-of-war were unable to reap the main advantages accruing from their successes in capturing shipping, and were compelled, therefore, to destroy the wealth which they had acquired at such great labour. By one coup, Captain Cyril Fuller, of H.M.S. "Cumberland," made a greater contribution to the issue of the war than all the German cruisers of which so much has been heard. This officer not only seized a group of nine German steamships, many of them heavily laden with valuable cargoes, but he was in the happy position of *not* having to sink them. Thus Germany was robbed of ships and goods to the approximate value of £500,000, and we were to that extent the better off—or, rather, the Navy's Bounty Fund and the State between them were the richer.

As was anticipated by all who had studied the writings of those naval officers and others who were in touch with the Admiralstab in Berlin, the naval war has so far been an affair of outposts, apart from the inconsiderable success which the enemy's commerce destroyers have achieved.

## Introduction

The Germans, as was anticipated, were not content merely to lock up their battle fleets and cruiser squadrons in the Kiel Canal; they determined to take full advantage of the power to injure us which the development of the submarine and the mine had placed in their hands. The public in the United Kingdom has from time to time been distressed by reports of ships which have been sunk by these two agencies, but we have the consolation, in reviewing the course of events during the past three months, of knowing that, if we have suffered some losses owing to the enemies' mines and submarines, and particularly the latter, the Germans have been even more considerably weakened owing mainly to the effective gunfire of British ships whenever an opportunity for action has occurred. The only really regrettable and inexplicable incident which has occurred is the naval action off the Chilian coast, when Rear Admiral Sir Christopher Cradock fought a German force of superior power and went down with two principal ships. On the balance the margin of superiority of the British Fleet has been increased, quite apart from the very considerable accessions of strength due to the completion of ships—Dreadnoughts, cruisers, destroyers, and submarines—which have been made since the war opened.

The tactics adopted by the Germans brought the Admiralty face to face with three main problems—mines, submarines, and marauding cruisers. The enemy has maintained his main fleets in masterly inactivity in the Kiel Canal, trusting that by these three agents he might



## 36 Heligoland to Keeling Island

achieve successes of military or at least moral value. He has failed in the first respect, and he will fail in the latter if the nation refuses to be frightened and accepts the assurance that the best intellect, experience, and knowledge of the naval service are being concentrated on the three problems. Confidence is infectious. It puts an edge to the sword and gives accuracy to the naval gun and rifle. British confidence is our health and the enemies' disease.

Under the Admiralty Order as to mines which was issued immediately after Admiral of the Fleet Lord Fisher became First Sea Lord, the North Sea was not closed, but navigation within it was further restricted. The official declaration of policy pointed to the further use of mines by us—and on a considerable scale, beyond the field sown between the Goodwins and the Belgium coast. We have never laid mines in any war in which we have been engaged in the past, but then we have never before had to fight an enemy with the same conceptions of warfare as the Germans have formed.

When the enemy disregarded all the rights of neutrals, it was impossible for the British Government to abstain from taking decisive action, and hence the closing of the northern exit of the North Sea to merchant shipping of neutral Powers. The idea of keeping the North Sea open and free from peril, so that the countries of Northern Europe might continue to use it without restriction, though we are engaged in a life and death struggle for all that we value, had to be abandoned, not because we wanted to abandon it,

but because the Germans forced us to do so. On Guy Fawkes' Day the new order became effective.

Then there is that other problem—the submarine peril. The enemy's submarines had been appearing for some time in the English Channel. A mine-field, such as was laid between the Goodwin Sands and Ostend, was a deterrent, but nothing more. If submarines care to run the risk of groping their way, blind as they are when under water, through a mine-infested area, they can do so. Now and again they will foul the mooring ropes—as was the experience of a British submarine—the E-6—early in the war, Lieutenant F. A. P. Williams-Freeman gaining the D.S.O., and Able Seaman E. R. Cremor the Conspicuous Gallantry medal for lifting the mine clear of the vessel without exploding it. German officers commanding these under-water craft were not haulted by the British mines. They determined to run great risks in order to get through them. Whether they have always been successful we do not know. There is reason to think that the enemy's losses in submarine craft have been more considerable than has yet been confessed.

After Lord Fisher's return to the Admiralty it became apparent that the naval authorities were not content to sit down under the submarine menace. It had become very real, and the announcement that Captain S. S. Hall, C.B., had been appointed to the Admiralty as Additional Naval Assistant to the First Sea Lord for submarine duties, gave widespread satisfaction. It indicated that Lord Fisher was devoting

## 38 Heligoland to Keeling Island .

attention to the problem of checking the activity of German submarines. What Captain Hall does not know about submarines is not worth knowing. He was for many years associated with this branch of the naval service, and was for some time Inspecting Captain of Submarines.

Then there were the marauding cruisers of the enemy. If the Admiralty could obtain to-day the cruisers which were struck out of the naval programme of 1909 and 1910—ships which would by this time be at sea and doing essential work—they would risk the frowns of the Little Navy M.P.'s in the House of Commons. But, perhaps, under the changed circumstances these people would not frown, much less threaten to turn the Government out of office. The Navy is short of good, swift small cruisers—of that there can be no doubt. The defect was revealed before the war—in fact, as far back as last spring, when the Admiralty had to confess to the New Zealand Government that a vessel of the "City" class could not be spared for duty in their waters. It was a confession of weakness, and the destruction which the German cruisers effected in the early months of the war is a further confession, though we have, of course, not suffered seriously—not so seriously as it was feared that we might suffer.

The Germans attached great importance to the influence which such operations against our commerce would have upon public opinion in the United Kingdom and throughout the Empire. It was conjectured that a feeling of panic would be created and that pressure would be brought to bear upon the naval and military authorities, and

that consequently their strategical plans would have to be varied. For two reasons this policy failed. In the first place the British Navy sealed the two exits from the North Sea before the declaration of war, and consequently a number of armed merchantmen which were to have been thrown out upon the trade routes were imprisoned, and the Germans were also unable to get to sea a group of swift war cruisers which happened to be in distant waters when the war opened and their number was comparatively small. In the second place the influence upon British public opinion of the losses to British shipping were negligible. It was realised that the depredations of the "Emden" and the captures made by the "Karlsruhe" could exercise no influence upon the ultimate issue of the war. Consequently at no period has the British public played into the hands of the German naval authorities by exhibiting feelings of irritation or distress, or attempting to put pressure upon the Admiralty to change its strategic plans. It was recognised that though the sinking of these British ships were regrettable incidents, success in war depends on the definite pursuit of a fixed objective, and that objective consisted in the defeat of the German Fleet in the North Sea, and the Austrian Fleet in the Adriatic, whenever these two navies dared to sally forth.

Reviewing the course of events during the past three months in which we have been engaged in hostilities, supported by our Allies, against two of the great fleets of the world, with a warship tonnage of 1,150,000, there is ample reason for

## 40 Heligoland to Keeling Island °

satisfaction and congratulation. The enemies have done their worst and the result is that they have suffered more serious losses than we have had to deplore. Owing to the influence of British sea power, Germany has lost already practically everything for which she has been fighting. • Her oversea trade has gone ; her merchant shipping has disappeared from the seas ; and only the shadow of her colonial empire remains. Her armies have suffered heavier casualties than any armies have suffered before. She has lost an immense quantity of war material and she is in the unfortunate position that, owing to the predominance of the British Fleet shutting off supplies of raw material, she cannot make good her losses. The economic pressure of our sea power has already begun to produce its inevitable results.

ARCHIBALD HURD.

November 18th, 1914.

## CHAPTER I

### GERMAN MINES AND THEIR VICTIMS.

THE remarkable state of readiness and efficiency of the British Navy at the outbreak of war has been fully described in "The Fleets at War." Hard upon the heels of the announcement that the British Empire had taken up arms against Germany came news of the first blow which the British Fleet had been able to inflict on the enemy. A laconic message from the Admiralty on August 6th, gave the bare facts of this affair, and was worded as follows :

"The Commodore of the Torpedo Flotillas reports that H.M.S. 'Amphion' and the Third Destroyer Flotilla have sunk the German mine-layer 'Königin Luise' at noon to-day. The 'Königin Luise' is a passenger vessel of the Hamburg-Amerika Line, of 2,163 tons gross tonnage and a speed of 20 knots, specially adapted for mine-laying.

"The laying of mines in shallow and commercial waters is a method which Great Britain has consistently set its face against, but Germany at The Hague Conference opposed restrictions in that direction."

The "Königin Luise" was subsequently described by German papers as a "seaside steamer,"

## 42 Heligoland to Keeling Island

evidently with a view of minimising her loss. Several points about this affair call for explanation, though it is doubtful whether they will ever be fully cleared up. In the first place, the fact that the "Königin Luise" had been engaged in mine-laying for several hours and was sunk in the southern area of the North Sea and—as transpired later—at no great distance from the English coast, at midday on August 5th, is proof positive that the conversion of this vessel from a peaceful passenger steamer into a mine-layer and her dispatch must have taken place at a German port a considerable time before war was formally declared. The declaration of hostilities by England was made at 11 p.m. on August 4th. To equip a steamer for the operation of mine-laying is the business of days, not of a few hours. Moreover, it has never been stated whether the "Königin Luise" was flying the German naval ensign when she was caught at her fell work. If not, or if she was sailing under a merchant flag, her mission was purely piratical in nature. On the whole, this incident, the first of the war at sea, sufficiently indicated that Germany was prepared to use every possible means, fair and foul, to damage British shipping, both naval and mercantile, and this with a sublime disregard for the safety of neutral vessels. In point of fact, events have abundantly proved that this indiscriminate and unscrupulous sowing of mines in the narrow seas has caused infinitely more damage and suffering to neutrals than to Great Britain.

The first reports of the action named the

"Amphion" as the ship which administered the *coup de grace* to the German mine-layer, but later information showed that the credit for this performance was partly due to several of the "L" class destroyers, which had been placed in commission only a few months before the war.

When first sighted by fishermen soon after dawn, the "Königin Luise" was about 60 miles off the coast of Suffolk. A patrol force was warned. Suspicion aroused by her movements was confirmed on the nearer approach of our ships. The leading destroyer of the flotilla was the "Lance." She fired a shot across the bows of the "Königin Luise," which at once replied with a number of small guns mounted on her decks. But whereas the German shells all missed their mark, those from the British cruiser and destroyers got home with terrible effect. Within a few minutes the mine-layer had been riddled. Her funnels and top-works were torn to shreds, and a large number of the crew were killed and wounded. Finally, a 4-inch lyddite shell fired by the "Lance" struck the mine-layer near the stern, where it exploded with terrific violence. A gaping hole was torn in the hull, the rent extending well below waterline. Some minutes later the German ship heeled over and sank, but not before a number of boats had been launched from the British ships to pick up survivors. About fifty of these were rescued, several of them having been terribly wounded.

Unfortunately, this smart little affair was to have a tragic sequel. Only a few hours after the "Königin Luise" disappeared beneath the waves the British Navy had to deplore the loss of the



## 44 Heligoland to Keeling Island

light cruiser "Amphion," the leader of the very flotilla which had so promptly dispatched the German mine-layer. The story of this event can best be told in the words of the official communiqué.

"At 9 a.m. on August 5th, H.M.S. 'Amphion,' with the Third Flotilla, proceeded to carry out a certain prearranged plan of search, and about an hour later a trawler informed them that she had seen a suspicious ship 'throwing things overboard' in an indicated position. Shortly afterwards the mine-layer 'Königin Luise' was sighted steering east; four destroyers gave chase, and in about an hour's time she was rounded up and sunk.

"After picking up the survivors the prearranged plan of search was carried out without incident until 3.30 a.m., when as the 'Amphion' was on the return course nearing the scene of the 'Königin Luise's' operations the course was altered so as to avoid the danger zone. This was successfully done until 6.30 a.m., when the 'Amphion' struck a mine.

"A sheet of flame instantly enveloped the bridge which rendered the captain insensible, and he fell on to the fore-and-aft bridge. As soon as he recovered consciousness he ran to the engine-room to stop the engines, which were still going at revolutions for 20 knots. As all the fore part was on fire it proved impossible to reach the bridge or to flood the fore magazines. The ship's back appeared to be broken and she was already settling down by the bows.

"All efforts were therefore directed towards placing the wounded in a place of safety in case of explosion and towards getting her in tow by the stern. By the time the destroyers closed it was clearly time to abandon ship. The men fell in for this

purpose with the same composure that had marked their behaviour throughout; all was done without hurry or confusion, and twenty minutes after the mine was struck the men, officers, and captain left the ship.

"Three minutes after the captain left his ship another explosion occurred which enveloped and blew up the whole fore part of the vessel. The effect showed that she must have struck a second mine, which exploded the fore magazine. Débris falling from a great height struck the rescue boats and destroyers, and one of the 'Amphion' shells burst on the deck of one of the latter, killing two of the men and a German prisoner rescued from the cruiser.

"The after part now began to settle quickly till its foremost part was on the bottom and the whole after part tilted up at an angle of 45 degrees. In another quarter of an hour this too had disappeared.

"Captain Fox speaks in high terms of the behaviour of officers and men throughout. Every order was promptly obeyed without confusion or perturbation."

Regret for the heavy loss of life, which amounted to more than 148 men, besides one officer, Staff Paymaster Gedge, was tempered in this case by the well-merited tribute paid to the heroism and discipline of those members of the crew who had escaped with their lives. There was not a moment of panic among the men, faced as they were by death in its most frightful form. Officers gave their orders as calmly and as quietly as though the ship were performing a mere peace evolution, and the crew executed those orders in precisely the same spirit. As it happened, about thirty of the German prisoners taken from the

## 46 Heligoland to Keeling Island

"Königin Luise" were confined in the forepart of the ship, which received the full force of the explosion, and these were killed to a man.

The "Amphion" was one of a group of seven cruisers of the same general type. She was constructed at Pembroke Dockyard, where she was launched in December, 1911. Her displacement was 3,440 tons, length 385 feet, beam  $41\frac{1}{2}$  feet, and she had Parsons turbines designed for 18,000 h.p. to give a speed of 25 knots, but this was exceeded by two full knots when the vessel had been in service a short time. She carried a complement of about 290 officers and men. The ship had no armour, but to localise damage from shell-fire or submarine explosion the hull was fitted with a double skin amidships. It was due, no doubt, to this provision, no less than to the sound material and fine workmanship put into the ship, that she remained afloat twenty minutes after the explosion, which had blown away practically the whole of the front portion of the hull and broken her back.

The "Amphion" had been commissioned, in April, 1913, by Captain Cecil H. Fox and a Devonport crew, and on the outbreak of war she was acting as leader to the Third Destroyer Flotilla, which comprised nearly twenty of the very latest class, all of one homogeneous type. The "Lance" was a unit of this flotilla. She is a boat of 965 tons, driven by turbines of 24,580 h.p. at a speed of 29 to 30 knots, and burns only oil in the furnaces. Three 4-inch quick-firing guns and four torpedo-tubes represent the armament. The complement numbers 100, of whom five are officers. The

"L" class of destroyers have particularly distinguished themselves in the war, and have proved remarkably successful boats.

• Scarcely had the first German mine-layer been disposed of than there began to arrive reports of disasters in the North Sea occasioned by floating mines. Trawlers and other fishing vessels were by far the heaviest sufferers. Hardly a day elapsed without one or more of these defenceless little craft being blown to atoms by striking infernal machines. In almost every case there was severe loss of life. Neutrals suffered even more than British vessels, but in every case the neutral State concerned was not powerful enough to protest with any effect.

• It was only to be expected that in view of the indignation, impotent but none the less intense, which this havoc among their fishing fleets evoked in Holland and the Scandinavian countries, the German Government would seek to shift the blame on to other shoulders. Reports were given out from Germany that in several instances the mines which had exploded with such deadly effect were really laid by the British. To refute this deliberate falsehood the Admiralty issued a statement, which was also intended to reassure neutral shipping by explaining, as far as possible, the steps which had been taken to keep open and free from mines the principal traffic routes in the North Sea. This statement, which was published on August 24th, was as follows :

“ The Admiralty wish to draw attention to their previous warnings to neutrals of the danger of

## 48 Heligoland to Keeling Island

traversing the North Sea. The Germans are continuing their practice of laying mines indiscriminately upon the ordinary trade routes. These mines are not laid in connexion with any definite military scheme, such as the closing of a military port, or as a distinct operation against a fighting fleet, but appear to be scattered on the chance of catching individual British war or merchant vessels.

"In consequence of this policy neutral ships, no matter what their destination, are exposed to the gravest dangers. Two Danish vessels, the steamship 'Maryland' and the steamship 'Broberg,' have within the last twenty-four hours been destroyed by these deadly engines in the North Sea while travelling on the ordinary routes at a considerable distance from the British coast. In addition to this, it is reported that two Dutch steamers, clearing from Swedish ports, were yesterday blown up by mines in the Baltic.

"In these circumstances the Admiralty desire to impress not only upon British but on neutral shipping the vital importance of touching at British ports before entering the North Sea in order to ascertain according to the latest information, the routes and channels which the Admiralty are keeping swept, and along which these dangers to neutrals are reduced so far as possible.

"The Admiralty, while reserving to themselves the utmost liberty of retaliatory action against this new form of warfare, announce that they have not so far laid any mines during the present war and that they are endeavouring to keep the sea routes open for peaceful commerce."

This precise and emphatic statement at once disposed of the German fiction that British mines were responsible for any of the damage done to neutral shipping.

One of the gravest events in connection with the mine danger was the sinking of the Wilson liner "Runo," early in September, after striking a mine. A large number of passengers were on board at the time, some of whom lost their lives, while others were injured. This disaster gave rise to considerable anxiety, and complaints were even heard in regard to the Admiralty measures for guaranteeing safe passages to peaceful shipping. Mines, it was said, were much more numerous than the public supposed. Practically the whole area of the North Sea was infested by them, and every vessel which ventured within those waters did so at very grave risk. So exaggerated and alarmist a view was speedily corrected by an official announcement to the effect that the Wilson liner had departed from Admiralty directions which would have assured her safe voyage. The Admiralty pointed out the extraordinary dangers attendant upon such disregard of warnings and advice. Public confidence was thus restored, and it is probable that the disaster to the "Runo," deplorable as it was, served as a useful caution to merchant shipping in general, and may thus have been the means of preserving many lives and much valuable property which would otherwise have been hazarded.

A moment's thought is required to realise both the adequacy and the limitation of the measures which the Admiralty adopted towards the mine danger. It is obvious that to make a "clean sweep" of the entire North Sea would be physically impossible. The area to be covered is immense—twice the area of Great Britain—

## 60 Heligoland to Keeling Island

while the influence of tides and currents is such that a stretch of water which was free of mines on one day might have become a regular mine-field by the next. What was done, however, was to institute a deliberate patrol of certain routes on which the attention of the mine-sweeping craft could be concentrated and maintained. In this way a fairly sure control of specified areas became possible, and within these areas shipping could ply in reasonable safety. The very fact that a virtual certificate of safety was at the disposal of such ships as conformed to the rule of touching at British ports before entering the North Sea proved the efficiency of the methods adopted by the Admiralty.

Another fact must be borne in mind when reckoning up the extent of the fishing fleet's casualties from mines. It was revealed that several British trawlers reported sunk in this way were doing duty under Admiralty orders as mine-sweepers when they came to grief. The first "war" Navy List (*i.e.*, that published in September) contained the names of over one hundred trawlers, which had been commissioned for naval service. Most, if not all, of these were used for mine-sweeping, which is, of course, attended with danger, but for which such vessels are well fitted. Hence, some, at least, of the British trawlers reported lost through mines had been destroyed while carrying out their sweeping duties, and thus do not come under the category of "peaceful fishing vessels." On the other hand, the frequent loss of neutral trawlers and other small craft demonstrated that not even

such vessels as were engaged in their ordinary peace avocations could enjoy safety off the routes prescribed by the Admiralty.

The next purely naval loss through the deadly mine was that of the torpedo-gunboat "Speedy," which occurred on September 3rd, some 30 miles off the East Coast. The casualties were an officer wounded, while one man was killed and two were seriously injured. The "Speedy" was an old torpedo-gunboat of 810 tons. She was of moderate speed, and was built in 1893. Her armament consisted of two 4.7-inch guns and four 3-pounders. The complement numbered eighty-five officers and men. In recent years she had been employed as a fishery protection cruiser in the North Sea. This mishap, apart from the personal casualties, which, luckily, were very slight, was of no military importance, in view of the small value which the "Speedy" possessed as a fighting ship.

The British Navy, true to its traditions of fair and above-board methods of fighting, has no fondness for the mine, which it has always looked upon as the weapon of small States, which dare not try their fortune in an open engagement. As the announcement of August 24th stated, the Admiralty had abstained from following the German example and distributing mines broadcast in the North Sea, but eventually their hands were forced in this matter, and a revision of their policy became necessary. On October 3rd, therefore, the following statement was given out by the Admiralty:

"The German policy of mine-laying, combined



## 52 Heligoland to Keeling Island

with their submarine activities, makes it necessary on military grounds for the Admiralty to adopt counter-measures.

"His Majesty's Government have therefore authorised a mine-laying policy in certain areas, and a system of minefields has been established, and is being developed upon a considerable scale.

"In order to reduce risks to non-combatants, the Admiralty announce that it is dangerous henceforward for ships to cross the area between latitude  $51^{\circ} 15' N.$  and  $51^{\circ} 40' N.$  and longitude  $1^{\circ} 35' E.$  and  $3^{\circ} E.$

"In this connection it must be remembered that the southern limit of the German minefield is latitude  $52^{\circ} N.$

"Although these limits are assigned to the danger area, it must not be supposed that navigation is safe in any part of the southern waters of the North Sea.

"Instructions have been issued to his Majesty's ships to warn East-going vessels of the presence of this new minefield."

The principal object of this measure, as may be gathered from the above statement, was to curtail the activity of German minelayers and submarines. Our mines were disposed in such a way as practically to seal up the southern approach to the North Sea. It is, of course, impossible to mine every square yard of even a comparatively limited sea area, and it must not be supposed that no enemy ship could traverse the area in question without meeting with destruction. Moreover, weather conditions have to be taken into consideration. Mines may be sowed in certain positions, where they will

remain while the sea is calm and currents are not strong. But in stormy weather they are liable to break away from their moorings, in which case their movements cannot be controlled, and they may drift right into the busiest traffic routes, where they are a deadly menace to friend and foe alike. The mine is, therefore, a two-edged weapon, and this being so it is easy to understand the reluctance with which the Admiralty decided to employ it.

On the other hand, the moral effect of these infernal engines is very great. Transports and supply ships have been continually passing to and fro between England and the Continent, bearing reinforcements and military stores to our troops of the Expeditionary Force. The English Channel and the extreme southern area of the North Sea are therefore our vital lines of communication, and it is here that the enemy's submarines and minelayers would endeavour to get to work if they found themselves able to come so far south without encountering mines. That the Admiralty had done its best to checkmate such a move by laying a minefield right across the path of these would-be raiders could not fail to increase the confidence of our troops in the security of their sea communications, whilst the measure had also a steadying effect upon public opinion.

Unfortunately, mines do not form an effective barrier to submarines. These boats, as every one knows, can travel at any depth, up to 150 feet or so, below the water. If the captain of a submarine knows definitely the position of a minefield, he can pass beneath it, provided all

## 54 Heligoland to Keeling Island

the mines were anchored at the same uniform depth, the only danger being that of fouling the mooring ropes. Whilst, therefore, the Straits of Dover were not entirely sealed against the enemy's submarines, any German boat which attempted to pass through the minefield did so at considerable risk.

It is not merely in the North Sea that the mine has taken its toll of life and property. On October 26th some consternation was caused in shipping circles by a report that the British steamer "Manchester Commerce" had foundered off the North of Ireland after striking a mine. How mines came to be laid in these waters, so far removed from the North Sea amphitheatre, has still to be explained, but it is supposed that the work must have been performed by some German vessel masquerading under the British or a neutral flag. The Admiralty, on receiving news of this affair, promptly issued a warning to shipping, and indicated the approximate position of the new enemy minefield, so that naval and mercantile vessels might give the danger zone a wide berth until such time as the British mine-sweepers had removed the infernal machines sown off the coast of Ireland.

Although the British Admiralty's action in mining the southern approach to the North Sea had been welcomed as a check to the operations of Germany's minelayers, it was felt that the authorities ought to go still further in their efforts to frustrate the murderous work carried on by these vessels. Hence there was a widespread feeling of satisfaction and relief when the

Admiralty, on November 2nd, made an announcement which foreshadowed the adoption of a more vigorous counter policy. The announcement was as follows :

" During the last week the Germans have scattered mines indiscriminately in the open sea on the main trade route from America to Liverpool, via the North of Ireland. Peaceful merchant ships have already been blown up with loss of life by this agency. The White Star liner " Olympic " escaped disaster by pure good luck.

" But for the warnings given by British cruisers, other British and neutral merchant and passenger vessels would have been destroyed.

" These mines cannot have been laid by any German ship of war. They have been laid by some merchant vessel flying a neutral flag which has come along the trade route as if for the purposes of peaceful commerce, and, while profiting to the full by the immunity enjoyed by neutral merchant ships, has wantonly and recklessly endangered the lives of all who travel on the sea, regardless of whether they are friend or foe, civilian or military in character.

" Mine-laying under a neutral flag and reconnaissance conducted by trawlers, hospital ships, and neutral vessels are the ordinary features of German naval warfare.

" In these circumstances, having regard to the great interests entrusted to the British Navy, to the safety of peaceful commerce on the high seas, and to the maintenance within the limits of international law of trade between neutral countries, the Admiralty feel it necessary to adopt exceptional measures appropriate to the novel conditions under which this war is being waged.

## 56 Heligoland to Keeling Island

" They therefore give notice that the whole of the North Sea must be considered a military area. Within this area merchant shipping of all kinds, traders of all countries, fishing craft, and all other vessels will be exposed to the gravest dangers from mines which it has been necessary to lay, and from warships searching vigilantly by night and day, for suspicious craft."

" All merchant and fishing vessels of every description are hereby warned of the dangers they encounter by entering this area except in strict accordance with Admiralty directions. Every effort will be made to convey this warning to neutral countries and to vessels on the sea, but from the 5th of November onwards the Admiralty announce that all ships passing a line drawn from the northern point of the Hebrides through the Faroe Islands to Iceland, do so at their own peril. .

" Ships of all countries wishing to trade to and from Norway, the Baltic, Denmark, and Holland are advised to come, if inward bound, by the English Channel and the Straits of Dover. There they will be given sailing directions which will pass them safely, so far as Great Britain is concerned, up the East Coast of England to Farn Island, whence a safe route will if possible be given to Lindesnaes Lighthouse. From this point they should turn north or south, according to their destination, keeping as near the coast as possible." The converse applies to vessels outward bound. By strict adherence to these routes the commerce of all countries will be able to reach its destination in safety, so far as Great Britain is concerned, but any straying, even for a few miles, from the course thus indicated may be followed by fatal consequences."

Before this declaration was issued, the con-

ditions prevailing in the North Sea were unique. In waters which represented the main theatre of the greatest naval campaign in modern history, shipping under neutral flags had been allowed to pass to and fro in almost perfect freedom. In their anxiety to avoid needless interference with the interests of neutral States, the British Government had abstained from taking extreme measures. But it very soon became evident that this leniency, far from benefiting neutral shipping, was, in fact, directly adding to its peril. Germany had taken the fullest advantage of the latitude enjoyed by neutrals to prosecute her system of sowing mines broadcast under cover of the neutral flag. Their disguised minelayers had had a fairly free hand, murdering scores of neutral seafarers and destroying numbers of neutral ships. The reign of anarchy had to be ended, and the Admiralty, therefore, declared the North Sea "a military area."

## CHAPTER II

### THE ELUSIVE "GOEBEN"

It is time now to turn to the extraordinary adventures of the only two German warships which were present in the Mediterranean on the outbreak of hostilities. These vessels were the "Goeben," a battle-cruiser of the Dreadnought type, and the "Breslau," a light cruiser, both of recent construction. They were regarded in Germany as the nucleus of a powerful squadron which, at no distant date, was permanently to represent the German flag in the Mediterranean and its adjacent waters. The original pretext for the dispatch of warships to that quarter of the world was the Balkan crisis of 1912. In the late autumn of that year, when the rout of the Turkish Army by the Balkan Allies exposed the foreign residents of Constantinople to the vengeance of the Ottoman soldiery, who were maddened by defeat, most of the Powers sent ships to the Golden Horn for the protection of their nationals.

The German squadron consisted of the "Goeben" and three modern light cruisers, and much satisfaction was derived by German patriots from the fact that the "Goeben" was by far the largest and most powerful unit of the international fleet assembled at the

Golden Horn. Two of the light cruisers were temporarily withdrawn, but the intention was to send them back to the Mediterranean, together with other vessels, when the completion of new ships had fulfilled all the requirements of the High Sea Fleet at home. Germany herself has no naval base of any description in the Mediterranean, but an arrangement had been made with Austria-Hungary whereby the hospitality of the latter's dockyard at Pola was afforded to the German squadron for repairs, and similar purposes. By maintaining a respectable squadron in the Middle Sea, Germany hoped to consolidate her relations with her two allies, Austria and Italy, and to prevail upon them to use their combined naval forces against Britain and France. How utterly this scheme failed is already a matter of history.

A day or two after war had been declared by Germany against France, the "Goeben" and the "Breslau" made their presence known by bombarding the French Algerian ports of Philippeville and Bona. A good deal of ammunition appears to have been fired away, but the damage done was negligible. Upon the forts replying the German ships sheered off, nor were they heard of again for several days.

In spite of the bombastic account of this affair published in Germany, the position of the two vessels was, in fact, highly critical. The refusal of Italy to lend herself to Germany's nefarious plan of conquering Europe, together with the bottling-up of the Austrian fleet in the Adriatic, had deprived the German ships of all hope of the



## 60 Heligoland to Keeling Island

assistance on which they had counted. Against them was arrayed the combined Anglo-French fleet, representing an enormous superiority, and including three British battle-cruisers, each of which was individually as powerful as the "Goeben" herself. Even if this fleet could be evaded, it would have been practically impossible for the German Admiral to break out through the Straits of Gibraltar, guarded as they were by the heavy guns of an impregnable fortress, and by the British submarines stationed there. It seemed that the fate of the German ships could be only a question of days.

The force at the disposal of the French Commander-in-Chief, Vice-Admiral Boué de Lapeyrère, was very formidable. It included four 23,500-ton Dreadnought battleships, armed with twelve 12-inch guns, the six fine battleships of the Danton class, which are almost Dreadnoughts by reason of their strong armament, and twelve older but still effective ships of the pre-Dreadnought period. There were also fourteen fairly modern armoured cruisers, some of them powerfully armed, but slow, and an exceedingly numerous flotilla of torpedo-craft, both of the surface and submarine variety. To this great fleet was added the British Mediterranean Squadron under Admiral Sir Berkeley Milne. It consisted of the battle-cruisers "Inflexible," "Indefatigable," and "Indomitable," each of which carried eight 12-inch guns, and could steam at 28 knots; the armoured cruisers "Defence," "Black Prince," "Duke of Edinburgh," and "Warrior," all of which mounted a main armament of 9.2-inch

## The Elusive "Goeben" 61

guns, and could steam at 23 knots; the fast light cruisers "Chatham," "Dublin," "Gloucester," and "Weymouth," armed with 6-inch guns; sixteen big ocean-going destroyers, and six submarines.

For a day or two the "Goeben" and "Breslau" were left to themselves, while the Allied Fleet guarded the sea route between Africa and France along which the 19th French Army Corps was being transported to Europe. This duty safely accomplished, the combined force was free to seek out and "round up" the two German ships. These cruisers arrived at Messina, in Sicily, where they appear to have coaled and made every preparation for immediate action. The local authorities were much impressed by the theatrical conduct of the German officers, who made their wills and deposited them, together with many personal effects, with the German Consul. This done, the "Goeben" and "Breslau" left harbour with the crews parading and bands playing, and, in short, with all the air of going out to fight a desperate action against overwhelming odds.

The details of this spectacular departure were transmitted to Germany, where the newspapers went into transports of patriotic ecstasy over the "mad-daring" heroism of their wonderful seamen. But the Homeric combat for which the world waited expectant never took place. The "Goeben" and the "Breslau" got to sea unmolested.

On or about August 7th the pair were sighted by the small British cruiser "Gloucester," which at once set off in hot pursuit. Her speed, however,

## 62 Heligoland to Keeling Island

was not great enough to allow her to close with the enemy, nor did the latter show any inclination to turn upon this small pursuer who could have been blown to atoms by a single broadside from the "Goeben." The "GloUCESTER" stuck to the chase till she was out-distanced, but not before several shells from her 6-inch guns had punished the "Breslau."

On August 14th definite news was received that both German cruisers had taken refuge in the Dardanelles, where they should have been disarmed and interned by the Turkish authorities for the duration of the war. Hard upon this came the astonishing intelligence that the two vessels had been purchased by the Turkish Government. The legality of the transaction was promptly questioned by British and French jurists, but as the Turkish Government gave formal assurances that the German officers and crews were to be removed from the ships without delay, Great Britain and France forebore to protest immediately against what looked very much like a grave breach of neutrality. Despite these assurances, the two cruisers continued with their original complements on board. Moreover, large bodies of German naval officers and sailors arrived in Turkey by overland route, and there were other indications that the whole of the Turkish Navy was about to pass under German control.

It was not to be expected that the British Commander-in-Chief in the Mediterranean would escape criticism. When it became known that the German vessels had been able to escape, this

officer, whose period of command had already terminated, returned home towards the end of the month, and the Admiralty published the following statement on August 30th :

"The conduct and dispositions of Admiral Sir Berkeley Milne in regard to the German vessels Goeben and Breslau have been subject to careful examination by the Board of Admiralty, with the result that their Lordships have approved of the measures taken in all respects."

It was announced at the same time that the Admiralissimo of the French Fleet, Vice-Admiral Boué de Lapeyrère, had assumed command of the combined Anglo-French fleet in the Mediterranean.

Three weeks later a further announcement from the Admiralty showed that the incident was not fully closed. This second message stated that Rear-Admiral E. C. Troubridge, C.B., C.M.G., M.V.O., in command of the Cruiser Squadron in the Mediterranean, had been recalled to England from the Mediterranean Fleet in order that an inquiry might be held into the circumstances leading to the escape of the "Goeben" and "Breslau" from Messina Straits. Subsequently Admiral Troubridge asked for a court-martial, as a result of which he received a full and honourable acquittal. No one consequently was held to blame for the manner in which these two ships eluded action and destruction.

The disappearance from the scene of the only effective German ships in the Mediterranean left the Allied Fleet at liberty to turn its attention to

## 64 Heligoland to Keeling Island

the fleet of Austria-Hungary; most of the ships were reported to be at Pola on the declaration of war. These forces were by no means negligible. They included three Dreadnought battleships of moderate tonnage but very heavy armament—"Viribus Unitis," "Tegetthoff," and "Prinz Eugen"—while a fourth unit of the same type was nearing completion. The "Viribus Unitis" displaces 21,000 tons and has a speed of 20 knots. As a main armament she carries twelve 12-inch guns, mounted in four triple turrets on the centre line, an arrangement which enables a broadside of all twelve weapons to be discharged on either beam. In the secondary battery are twelve 6-inch quick-firers,\* in addition to 20 smaller guns for repelling torpedo attack. These three vessels are very formidable antagonists, and beside them are three other ships ("Erzherzog Franz Ferdinand" class) which compare with the British "Lord Nelson" type, as they carry a mixed armament of 12-inch and 9.4-inch guns. The remaining six effective battleships in the Austro-Hungarian fleet are medium-sized vessels, displacing 8,000 to 10,400 tons, and having as their main armament 9.4-inch guns. Cruisers are very scarce, and in this respect the fleet is notably weak.\* Six new and powerful destroyers had been commissioned just before the war, bringing the Austrian total in this type to 18 boats. There were also about 75 torpedo-boats, most of them fairly modern, and six submarines.

It speedily appeared that although the major part of the Austro-Hungarian Navy was sheltering

at Pola, a few unimportant warships were operating on the Dalmatian coast. Antivari was subjected to bombardment by some small cruisers from the Austrian base at Cattaro, but no damage was inflicted. On August 17th it was officially announced that the French fleet in the Mediterranean had made a sweep up the Adriatic as far as Cattaro, and that a small Austrian cruiser of the "Aspern" type was fired on and sunk.

Although the "Zenta," the vessel in question, was an old and weak ship of only 2,400 tons, her loss was a serious blow to Austria, very weak in cruisers. After this experience the enemy retired more closely than ever to the seclusion of his fortified base at the head of the Adriatic, and beyond sending out minelayers to place mines along the approaches to Trieste and Pola, he gave no further sign of activity. A few days previously a passenger steamer, the "Baron Gautsch," belonging to the Austrian Lloyd, struck a mine near Lussin, Dalmatia, and speedily sank. Of the 310 persons aboard at the time, including many passengers, only 180 appear to have been saved. The mine which caused this disaster had undoubtedly been laid by the Austrians themselves. Earlier in the war they were reported to have lost a torpedo boat under similar circumstances, but this incident was not entirely confirmed.

The fact that no very active measures have been taken to dispose of the main Austro-Hungarian fleet is not surprising in view of the circumstance that this fleet does not represent any great menace

## 66 Heligoland to Keeling Island

to Allied interests in the Mediterranean. It cannot come out without being annihilated. On the other hand, any attempt to "dig it out" would almost certainly entail heavy loss to the Allies, which would hardly be compensated by the permanent removal of a hostile fleet too weak in existing circumstances to do any serious mischief. . . .

## CHAPTER III

### THE BATTLE IN THE BIGHT

ALL this time no event of importance had occurred to dissipate the ominous calm which prevailed in the North Sea, the main theatre of naval operations in the gigantic struggle. The huge German Fleet, the construction and development of which had played so prominent a part in Germany's plan of world-dominion, was to all intents and purposes locked up behind its chain of formidable coast fortresses. It had failed at the outset to get in the first all-important blow or even to assume those dashing guerilla tactics which everybody in Germany expected would be employed against our fleet in order to wear down its superiority in numbers. The numerous flotilla of fast sea-going destroyers which Germany possessed made no move against the battleships of Sir John Jellicoe's Grand Fleet, nor were the German submarines much in evidence at the outset. A period of stalemate had set in and was to continue during the first few weeks of the war, if we except the operations of German minelayers in the North Sea, which resulted in much loss of life and suffering to British and neutral fishermen, but had no effect whatever on the naval campaign proper.



## 68 Heligoland to Keeling Island

Those people who had expected to witness a second Trafalgar in the North Sea a few days after war had been declared, and were becoming impatient at the total absence of any such news, had their hopes temporarily raised by the following laconic announcement which the official Press Bureau issued on August 19th :

"Some desultory fighting has taken place during the day between the British patrolling squadrons and flotillas and German reconnoitring cruisers. No losses are reported or claimed. A certain liveliness is apparent in the southern area of the North Sea."

But the days passed without further news, and the events which had prompted this somewhat vague paragraph were subsequently explained by the German Press. According to this source, two light cruisers, the "Strassburg" and "Stralsund," had carried out a "forward movement" in the southern area of the North Sea. Close to the English coast they had sighted and fired on some British destroyers and submarines, and they claimed to have sunk one of the latter and to have damaged several destroyers. The fact was, as the Press Bureau stated, that no damage was done to either side. Possibly one of our submarines, finding the German shells were falling unpleasantly near, dived below in order to escape the projectiles, and this manœuvre deceived the enemy, who thought they had sunk the boat. Be this as it may, the skirmish was not pressed home by either side, and once more an almost complete silence descended upon the North Sea.

It was, however, destined to be broken with

## The Battle in the Bight 69

startling and dramatic suddenness, and that without much further delay. The first intimation of the initial naval engagement of the war was contained in a short but pithy announcement issued on August 28th by the Press Bureau, which spoke of a "concerted operation of some consequence" having been attempted that morning against the Germans in Heligoland Bight. Strong forces of destroyers, it was stated, supported by light cruisers and battle-cruisers, and working in conjunction with submarines, intercepted and attacked the German destroyers and cruisers guarding the approaches to the German coast. The results of this "fortunate and fruitful" operation were thus described :

"Two German destroyers were sunk and many damaged. The First Light Cruiser Squadron sank the 'Mainz,' receiving only slight damage. The First Battle-Cruiser Squadron sank one cruiser, Köln class, and another cruiser disappeared in the mist, heavily on fire, and in a sinking condition. All the German cruisers which engaged were thus disposed of." . . .

It was added that "the commanding officers concerned in this skilfully handled operation were Rear-Admirals Beatty, Moore, and Christian, and Commodores Keyes, Tyrwhitt, and Good-enough."

This preliminary report, issued with such admirable promptitude, was amplified in the following official communication :

"In the action of August 28th, off Heligoland, the light armoured cruiser 'Arethusa' and not the

## 70 Heligoland to Keeling Island

'Amethyst,' as previously stated, played the principal part. This vessel, which is the first of the twenty built under the present Board of Admiralty, carried the broad pennant of Commodore Tyrwhitt, commanding the flotillas of the First Fleet.

"The principle of the operation was a scooping movement by a strong force of destroyers, headed by the 'Arethusa,' to cut the German light craft from home, and engage them at leisure in the open sea. The 'Arethusa,' leading the line of destroyers, was first attacked by two German cruisers, and was sharply engaged for 35 minutes at a range of about 3,000 yards, with the result that she sustained some damage and casualties, but drove off the two German cruisers, one of which she seriously injured with her 6-inch guns.

"Later in the morning she engaged at intervals two other German vessels, who were encountered in the confused fighting which followed, and in company with the 'Fearless' and the Light Cruiser Squadron contributed to the sinking of the cruiser 'Mainz.' In these encounters the 'Arethusa's' speed was reduced to 10 knots, and many of her guns were disabled, and at one o'clock she was about to be attacked by two other cruisers of the German Town class when the Battle-Cruiser Squadron most opportunely arrived and pursued and sank these new antagonists.

"The armoured protection, speed, and fighting qualities of the 'Arethusa' class have now been vindicated, and this is satisfactory in view of the fact that a large number of these valuable and unique vessels will join the Fleet in the next few months. It must be remembered that the 'Arethusa' had only been commissioned a few days before as an emergency ship, and that the officers and crew were new to each other and to her. In these circumstances

## The Battle in the Bight 71

the series of actions which they fought during the morning is extremely creditable, and adds another page to the annals of a famous ship.

"Although only two of the enemy's destroyers were actually observed to sink, most of the 18 or 20 boats founded up and attacked were well punished, and only saved themselves by scattered flight. The superior gun power and strength of the British destroyers, ship for ship, was conclusively demonstrated. The destroyers themselves did not hesitate to engage the enemy's cruisers, both with guns and torpedoes, with hardihood, and two of them, the 'Laurel' and 'Liberty,' got knocked about in the process.

"Intercepted German signals and other information from German sources confirm the report of Rear-Admiral Beatty as to the sinking of the third German cruiser, which now appears to have been the 'Ariadne.' The British destroyers exposed themselves to considerable risk in endeavouring to save as many as possible of the drowning German sailors. The British officers present vouch for the fact that German officers were observed firing at their own men in the water with pistols, and that several were shot before their eyes under these peculiar circumstances. The destroyer 'Defender' was actually picking up wounded with her boats when she was driven off by the approach of another German cruiser, and had to leave two of her boats, containing one officer and nine men, behind.

"It was feared that these had been made prisoners, but happily submarine E 4 arrived and brought the British party home." As it was not possible to accommodate the 30 Germans in the submarine they were allowed to return to Germany in the boat under the charge of an ober-lieutenant who was unwounded.

"The complements of the five German vessels

## 72 Heligoland to Keeling Island

known to have been sunk aggregated about 1,200 officers and men, all of whom, with the exception of these 30 and about 300 wounded and unwounded prisoners, perished. Besides this there is the loss, which must have been severe, on board the German torpedo-boats and other cruisers which did not sink during the action.

"The total British casualties amounted to 69 killed and wounded, among whom must, however, be included as killed two officers of exceptional merit—Lieutenant-Commander Nigel K. W. Barttelot and Lieutenant Eric W. P. Westmacott. All the British ships will be fit for service in a week or ten days.

"The success of this operation was due in the first instance to the information brought to the Admiralty by the submarine officers, who have during the past three weeks showed extraordinary daring and enterprise in penetrating the enemy's waters.

"The First Lord has telegraphed to the American Ambassador at Berlin, desiring him to inform Grand Admiral von Tirpitz that his son has been saved and is unwounded."

In order to complete the official record of the first naval engagement of the war, it is necessary to turn to the important series of despatches received from the senior officers concerned, which appeared in the *London Gazette* on October 22nd. This sequence of documents showed more clearly than before that the affair was a reconnaissance in force carried out by destroyer flotillas under the leadership of their light cruisers, with the First Light Cruiser Squadron in reserve and the Battle-Cruiser Squadron in further reserve. Submarines of the Eighth Submarine

## The Battle in the Bight 73

Flotilla, under Commodore Roger J. B. Keyes, who was in the destroyer "Lurcher," were already in position in the vicinity of Heligoland, their chief mission being to entice the enemy out, when, early in the morning of the 28th, Commodore Reginald G. Tyrwhitt, in the "Arethusa," with the First and Third Destroyer Flotillas, took up his assigned station.

The first action began about seven o'clock with the sighting of the enemy's destroyers, numbering eighteen or twenty. Hardly had these craft been cut off from Heligoland when two enemy cruisers, one with four funnels and the other with two, loomed out of the mist. The "Arethusa" was soon hotly engaged with both, and though her companion cruiser the "Fearless" and the British destroyers also drew the enemy's fire, she was soon badly damaged in the unequal combat, all her guns except one 6-inch, and all her torpedo tubes being out of action. Nevertheless a well-aimed projectile from a single gun smashed to bits the forebridge of the smaller German cruiser, whereupon the entire enemy's squadron withdrew for a time into the haze. It was during this stage of the operations that the First Destroyer Flotilla sank the German destroyer V 187 and that submarine E 4 performed her timely work of rescue already referred to.

The "Arethusa" profited by the lull in the fighting to get all but two of her guns working again and the whole flotilla proceeded westward. Then, about eleven o'clock, the four-funnelled German cruiser reappeared, and another heavy action began. The situation had, in fact, become

## 74 Heligoland to Keeling Island

critical, and, it is clear, was only saved by the arrival of Sir David Beatty's battle-cruiser squadron, summoned by signals which had become more and more urgent. But the narrative so far as the "Arethusa" is concerned, may be best continued by quoting from Commodore Tyrwhitt's own despatch:

"At 10.55 a.m. a four-funnelled German cruiser was sighted, and opened a very heavy fire at about eleven o'clock.

"Our position being somewhat critical, I ordered 'Fearless' to attack, and the First Flotilla to attack with torpedoes, which they proceeded to do with great spirit. The cruiser at once turned away, disappeared in the haze, and evaded the attack.

"About ten minutes later the same cruiser appeared on our starboard quarter. Opened fire on her with both 6-inch guns; 'Fearless' also engaged her, and one division of destroyers attacked her with torpedoes without success.

"The state of affairs and our position was then reported to the Admiral Commanding Battle-Cruiser Squadron.

"We received a very severe and almost accurate fire from this cruiser; salvo after salvo was falling between 10 and 30 yards short, but not a single shell struck; two torpedoes were also fired at us, being well directed, but short.

"The cruiser was badly damaged by 'Arethusa's' 6-inch guns, and a splendidly-directed fire from 'Fearless,' and she shortly afterwards turned away in the direction of Heligoland.

"Proceeded, and four minutes later sighted the three-funnelled cruiser 'Mainz.' She endured a heavy fire from 'Arethusa' and 'Fearless' and many destroyers. After an action of approximately twenty-

## The Battle in the Bight 75

five minutes, she was seen to be sinking by the head, her engines stopped, besides being on fire.

"At this moment the Light Cruiser Squadron appeared, and they very speedily reduced the 'Mainz' to a condition which must have been indescribable.

"I then recalled 'Fearless' and the destroyers, and ordered cease fire.

"We then exchanged broadsides with a large four-funnelled cruiser on the starboard quarter at long range, without visible effect.

"The Battle-Cruiser Squadron now arrived, and I pointed out this cruiser to the Admiral Commanding, and was shortly afterwards informed by him that the cruiser in question had been sunk and another set on fire.

"The weather during the day was fine, sea calm, but visibility poor, not more than 3 miles at any time when the various actions were taking place, and was such that ranging and spotting were rendered difficult.

"I then proceeded with fourteen destroyers of the Third Flotilla, and nine of the First Flotilla.

"'Arethusa's' speed was about 6 knots until 7 p.m., when it was impossible to proceed any further, and fires were drawn in all boilers except two, and assistance called for.

"At 9.30 p.m. Captain Wilmot S. Nicholson, of the 'Hogue,' took my ship in tow in a most seaman-like manner, and, seeing that the night was pitch dark and the only lights showing were two small hand lanterns, I consider his action was one which deserves special notice from their lordships."

To understand fully the part played by the cruiser squadrons in the operations, it is necessary to turn to the despatch of Sir David Beatty himself. Having described how his ships took



## 76 Heligoland to Keeling Island

up their arranged station in support of the smaller craft he proceeds :

" At 11 a.m. the squadron was attacked by three submarines. The attack was frustrated by rapid manoeuvring, and the four destroyers were ordered to attack them. Shortly after 11 a.m., various signals having been received indicating that the Commodore (T) and Commodore (S) were both in need of assistance, I ordered the Light Cruiser Squadron to support the torpedo flotillas.

" Later I received a signal from the Commodore (T), stating that he was being attacked by a large cruiser, and a further signal informing me that he was being hard pressed, and asking for assistance. The Captain (D), First Flotilla, also signalled that he was in need of help.

" From the foregoing the situation appeared to me critical. . . . At 11.30 a.m. the battle-cruisers turned to E.S.E., and worked up to full speed. It was evident that to be of any value the support must be overwhelming and carried out at the highest speed possible.

" I had not lost sight of the risk of submarines, and possible sortie in force from the enemy's base, especially in view of the mist to the south-east.

" Our high speed, however, made submarine attack difficult, and the smoothness of the sea made their detection comparatively easy. I considered that we were powerful enough to deal with any sortie except by a battle squadron, which was unlikely to come out in time, provided our stroke was sufficiently rapid.

" At 12.15 p.m. ' Fearless ' and First Flotilla were sighted retiring west. At the same time the Light Cruiser Squadron was observed to be engaging an enemy ship ahead. They appeared to have her beat.

## The Battle in the Bight 77

"I then steered N.E. to sounds of firing ahead, and at 12.30 p.m. sighted 'Arethusa' and Third Flotilla retiring to the westward engaging a cruiser of the 'Kolberg' class on our port bow. I steered to cut her off from Heligoland, and at 12.37 p.m. opened fire. At 12.42 the enemy turned to N.E., and we chased at 27 knots.

"At 12.56 p.m. sighted and engaged a two-funnelled cruiser ahead. 'Lion' fired two salvos at her, which took effect, and she disappeared into the mist, burning furiously and in a sinking condition. In view of the mist and that she was steering at high speed at right angles to 'Lion,' who was herself steaming at 28 knots, the 'Lion's' firing was very creditable.

"Our destroyers had reported the presence of floating mines to the eastward, and I considered it inadvisable to pursue her. It was also essential that the squadrons should remain concentrated, and I accordingly ordered a withdrawal. The battle-cruisers turned north and circled to port to complete the destruction of the vessel first engaged. She was sighted again at 1.25 p.m. steaming S.E., with colours still flying. 'Lion' opened fire with two turrets, and at 1.35 p.m., after receiving two salvos, she sank.

The conspicuous feature of the action in Heligoland Bight was the activity of the submarines on both sides. The Vice Admiral's despatch bears witness to the persistence with which the Germans employed this method of attack on our larger vessels, but without success, owing to the use of the battery and the high speed of the British ships. The completing or burning may fittingly be left,

## 78 Heligoland to Keeling Island

side the opportunities for displaying such tactics have been strictly limited, but the work of these dashing little craft was none the less invaluable, and the subject deserves a final quotation from the Admiralty documents.

Of exceptional interest, also, were the allusions in the Admiralty message already quoted to the distinguished part which the new light cruiser "Arethusa" had taken in the brilliant engagement. This vessel was the first of those "light armoured cruisers" which the Board of Admiralty decided to construct in 1912, and the features and functions of which had been debated with keen interest in naval circles. The First Lord, Mr. Winston Churchill, spoke very highly of the type in the course of his speech when introducing the Navy Estimates of 1912-13. "These cruisers would," he said, "be the smallest, cheapest, and fastest vessels, protected by vertical armour, ever projected for the British Navy. They are designed for attendance on the battle-fleet. They are designed to be its eyes and ears by night and day; to watch over it in movement and at rest. They will be strong enough, and fast enough, to overhaul and cut down any torpedo-boat destroyer afloat, and generally they will be available for the purposes of observation and reconnaissance."

Mr. Churchill's forecast as to the all-round usefulness of the "light armoured cruiser" was completely justified by the magnificent work performed by the "Arethusa" in the Bight of Helig. Squadron was obs. of this interesting and enemy ship ahead. They app.; Length, 410 feet;

beam, 39 feet; displacement, 3,750 tons. The turbine engines develop 30,000 horse-power, giving a speed of 29-30 knots, and oil only is used to fire the boilers. The armament consists of two 6-inch and six 4-in. quick-firing guns, with two twin torpedo tubes. Side armour protects the water-line, an almost complete belt being fitted. Amidships this belt is 3-in. thick; above it there is 3½-inch armour, whilst the ends of the ships have somewhat thinner plating. This protection, it was explained by Mr. Churchill, would suffice against the heaviest guns carried by any foreign torpedo-craft. As the action off Heligoland proved, the "Arethusa's" armour, in fact, brought her through an extremely heavy cannonade by hostile cruisers, which mounted numerous batteries of 4-inch guns.

The "Arethusa" was laid down at Chatham Dockyard on October 28th, 1912, the engines being supplied by the Fairfield Company. When war broke out she had not even begun her trials, and her prompt appearance in the firing line, no less than her excellent behaviour throughout the action, reflected the greatest credit on builders and designers alike.

Under the Estimates for 1912, no fewer than eight of these cruisers were laid down. A further batch of eight similar ships, of a slightly improved type, was laid down under the 1913 Estimates, and four more were begun under the Estimates of 1914. In all, therefore, no fewer than twenty of these extremely handy and valuable little craft were in service, or completing, or building, when the war opened.

## 80 Heligoland to Keeling Island

The destroyers composing the Third Flotilla which the "Arethusa" led into action with such fortunate results, are all of uniform type and belong to the "L" class, twenty in number. They are boats of 965 tons, with a speed of 29-30 knots, and are powerfully armed with three 4-in. quick-firing guns, besides four torpedo-tubes for discharging the latest and most formidable torpedo. In size, sea-keeping qualities, and armament, these boats are immeasurably superior to the latest German torpedo-craft, and this superiority was rightly emphasised in the official statement which we have quoted. The German principle of destroyer design has always been that such boats are torpedo carriers pure and simple, and that everything should be sacrificed to speed and torpedo armament. Hence the German destroyers carry only a couple of small, low-powered guns apiece, as it was never intended that they should engage with hostile destroyers in an artillery duel. The fight off Heligoland conclusively demonstrated the fallacy of this reasoning and the wisdom of the British principle, which is that warships of every kind, destroyers included, should be able to take care of themselves under all conceivable conditions. Thanks to her powerful gun armament, the average British destroyer has nothing to fear in a duel with any similar German boat, and she has the advantage of speed over bigger ships which she cannot engage with any hope of success.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE HUMAN FACTOR

It was natural, of course, that the actual importance of the fight off Heligoland—in reality an affair of outposts—should be somewhat magnified in the public mind. Nevertheless, considerable material damage was inflicted on the enemy, who lost three of his cruisers—two of which were quite modern and extremely fast—and two destroyers, in addition to a large number of other torpedo craft badly damaged. His casualties, too, were very heavy; ours were slight in comparison. But, above all, this dashing attack, skilfully conceived and no less skilfully carried out, proved that the British Navy of to-day was well worthy of the splendid fighting traditions handed down to it by the long line of immortal seamen who won and maintained for Britain the supremacy of the seas. There was certainly nothing suggestive of decadence in the conduct of the British officers and men on this occasion.

And let it be remembered that for years past German writers had been assuring their deluded countrymen that the British Navy, outwardly invincible and imposing enough, was inwardly rotten, living on its reputation, and only waiting

## 82 Heligoland to Keeling Island

to relinquish the Trident of Neptune to a bold and resolute rival—the German Navy for choice. That was the light in which a vast majority of the Germans viewed the British Navy. All the more unexpected and bitter, therefore, must have been the news of this preliminary fight at Heligoland, with its convincing testimony of the skill, resourcefulness, and dash displayed on the British side.

The effect on the officers and men of the German ships, lying cooped up behind their forts and minefields, must have been the reverse of stimulating. After having been taught that, given anything like equal numbers, they could achieve an easy victory over Britain's degenerate seamen, they found to their astonishment that those seamen had given striking proof of the same splendid audacity and courage which had won triumph after triumph for Nelson and his band of brothers and had made the British Navy feared and respected throughout the Seven Seas.

For it must not be forgotten that this "reconnaissance in force" was undertaken in the face of immense risk. The waters adjacent to Heligoland were known to be heavily mined. Mounted on the island itself were batteries of powerful guns, able to administer the death-blow to a great armoured ship at several miles' range. In the torpedo harbour at Heligoland might have been lurking many submarines and other torpedo-craft. And, to crown all, the British ships, gliding in through the mist, never knew at what moment they might see the huge forms of the enemy's battleships and big armoured

cruisers driving down upon them. Yet all these perils, actual and potential alike, were carefully weighed and coolly discounted by the men who planned the reconnaissance. The fact that they carried it out without losing a ship, after inflicting heavy losses on the enemy, was in itself the most crushing answer which could have been given to ignorant or malignant detractors of the British Navy.

On the other hand, the behaviour of the German officers, who were seen firing at their own men struggling in the water, threw a lurid light on the spirit on board at least some ships of the German Fleet. Evidently the German sailors, dismayed by the deadly effect of our fire, had leapt overboard to escape the hailstorm of steel and high-explosive which swept their ships from end to end. Smarting with mortification at this desertion, their officers retaliated by pistolling the wretched seamen who were drowning alongside. A ghastlier incident it were hard to imagine. In view of all these results, no one will question the aptness of the official communiqué in speaking of the fight off Heligoland as having been "fortunate and fruitful."

Stories of the fight by some of those who took part in it revealed the splendid spirit of comradeship uniting the officers and men of the British Navy. Before the war it was often contended that the democratic trend of the age was prejudicial to true discipline, and that the test of war would show a falling-off in the habit of unquestioning obedience among our soldiers and sailors. No prediction could have been more



## 84 Heligoland to Keeling Island

completely falsified. The superb achievements of our gallant Army on the Continental battle-fields, no less than the magnificent work of our ships at sea, have proved that between the officers and men of both fighting Services there exists a spirit of loyalty and comradeship which has never been surpassed in the martial annals of Britain.

The superficial and petty evidences of discipline, beloved of the Prussian drill-sergeant, are perhaps less visible with us than they were a century ago, when flogging and other severe measures were considered indispensable for keeping our fighting men well under control. Yet that truer discipline which is based on the respect of the subordinate for an officer whom he knows to be worthy of it has never been higher in this country. The men serving with the Grand Fleet, and in those other units of the British Navy which have kept the trade routes open and performed yeoman service in every quarter of the globe, have exhibited complete confidence in their officers, and these in turn have realised that the men under their command are to be relied upon fully in every emergency. The true comradeship which unites the whole sea service was demonstrated afresh by this action in the Bight of Heligoland.

The engagement was of value more by reason of the insight it gave into the human element of the contending fleets than for any technical experience it afforded. Yet even in this respect some interesting data might be gleaned. We have already learned from the official report how

admirably an entirely new type of cruiser justified its design, thus vindicating the foresight and skill of our naval architects. As regards the highly efficient weapons with which a modern fleet is armed, the engagement certainly proved that well-directed shell fire is even more destructive than had been anticipated. All the eye-witnesses speak of the appalling havoc wrought among the German ships by our projectiles. The terrible punishment which one of the enemy's cruisers, the "Mainz," received was described by a member of the crew of H.M.S. "Southampton" in a letter published by the *Hampshire Telegraph* of September 11th, from which the following extract is taken :

"The enemy turned out to be a three-funnelled cruiser, somewhat larger than us. We immediately opened fire at a range of 10,000 to 13,000 yards. The enemy replied and steamed away from us, but eventually we ran parallel.

"Things began to look lively, as we were putting shells into her at the rate of five every ten seconds, and 6-inch lyddite at that. The shells have a terrible effect, and fumes from them kill anyone within a range of 60 yards, while they set on fire everything near them.

"Presently she was seen to be on fire, and a few minutes afterwards a beautifully-placed shell put 'paid' to two of her funnels. All amidships was now a raging fire, and the end came when her mainmast went by the board. We immediately ceased fire and altered our course, going close to her.

"What a sight she was ! The fire amidships had made two of the funnels red-hot and flames and smoke were pouring out of her. Her port side was

## 86 Heligoland to Keeling Island

like a sieve. Every gun was smashed and bent, some looking round corners, some on their sides—in fact, her whole upper deck was chaos.

“The fore bridge was a tangled mass of ironwork, while the wire stays from the foremast were swinging in the air. What she was like inside, heaven alone knows.

“We passed within a couple of hundred yards of her, and the only living beings on the upper deck were one man on the quarter-deck and what looked like a couple of officers standing under what had been the fore-bridge. Many of them had jumped overboard, and, of course, were rescued, but these only totalled seven officers and seventy-nine men out of a crew of 400 or 500.”

All this damage, it should be noted, was inflicted by the 6-inch guns with which the “Southampton” and her consorts in the First Light Cruiser Squadron are armed. This weapon is classed as a “light” gun, and its 100 lb. projectile is completely dwarfed by the mammoth shell, weighing no less than 1,400 lbs., which is discharged by the guns of our latest battleships and battle-cruisers. Nevertheless, the 6-inch is a most formidable weapon, especially when used against unarmoured or lightly protected ships, such as the German cruisers which were sunk off Heligoland. When worked by a well-trained crew, this gun can fire six or more rounds per minute.

Every version of the fight mentions the excellent gunnery of the British ships, in contrast to the poor practice made by the German gunlayers. This testimony is very gratifying, pointing as

it does to superior training or steadier nerves, perhaps to both, on the part of the British seamen. Considering the comparatively long period during which our ships were under fire, it is remarkable that they should have sustained no vital damage. The "Arethusa" had, it is true, several guns disabled and her speed brought down to 10 knots, but she received no mortal hurt and the casualties aboard her were not at all heavy.

Moreover, this ship came into port, after being towed homewards by a large cruiser, under her own steam and floating on an even keel, two circumstances which showed conclusively that she had received no really grave damage. The reduction in speed did not necessarily imply a hit or hits in the boilers or machinery. Shell fragments may have shattered a steampipe, an occurrence which would at once cause a falling-off in speed. Even injury to the funnels brings down the speed of a ship, as it affects the draught to the furnaces and thus diminishes the steam pressure. It follows, therefore, that the mere fact of a ship having lost much of her original speed is no proof that she has been badly hit.

Even more remarkable than the resistance of the "Arethusa" was that of the British destroyers to the cannonade of the German cruisers. We know from the official communiqué that our destroyers did not hesitate to engage these cruisers "with hardihood." The "Mainz" and the "Köln," two of the German ships in question, were each armed with twelve 4.1-inch quick-firing guns, able to discharge a large number of 35-lb. shells per minute. The "Ariadne,"

## 88 Heligoland to Keeling Island

another enemy ship engaged, carried ten of these guns. Our destroyers must have come under a perfect hail of projectiles, and it is extraordinary that not one of them should have been sunk.

According to every theory, the fate of a torpedo vessel assailed by a cruiser is sealed. But how did it work out in practice? The answer is given in the official statements, which showed that two of our boats, the "Laurel" and "Liberty," "got knocked about," and that a third boat, the "Laertes," also suffered somewhat. Yet their injuries must have been comparatively slight, for all three boats were repaired and at sea again less than a fortnight after the engagement. That torpedo-boat-destroyers should have been under heavy fire from cruisers for several hours without receiving one fatal hit speaks well for the strength of their construction. At the same time, the escape of these boats must have been largely due to the indifferent marksmanship of the Germans.

Notwithstanding the tribute paid in the official German report of the engagement to the chivalry and courage of our men in risking their own lives to save the drowning German sailors, it was not long before malicious reports to the contrary effect were being circulated by influential Germans. In order to silence these calumnies the Admiralty published on September 24th a very interesting and important statement, here subjoined:

"The Secretary of the Admiralty issues the following reply to a statement made publicly by the German Minister at Copenhagen to the effect that German officers did not, as had been reported from

England, fire on swimming German sailors after the Heligoland fight, but that the English themselves fired on the German swimmers, and that an English shell was thrown into a lifeboat containing German survivors from torpedo boat V 187, though, happily, it did not explode.

"When the German destroyer V 187 was sinking, the 'Goshawk' ordered the British destroyers to cease fire, and those in the vicinity to lower their boats to pick up the survivors, many of whom had jumped overboard some time previously. An officer in the after-part of V 187 thereupon trained the after gun on the 'Goshawk' and fired at her at a range of about 200 yards, hitting her in the ward-room, under the impression, probably, that the boats' crew intended to board and capture his vessel, whose colours were still flying.

"It was necessary to destroy V 187's after-gun, which was done with a few well-placed shots, after which every effort was made to save life, until a German cruiser of the 'Stettin' class appeared on the scene, out of the mist, and opened a heavy fire on the British destroyers and their boats. The destroyers were forced to retire in order to avoid destruction; the 'Goshawk' removed her men from her boat, leaving it to the German prisoners, nearly all of whom were wounded. It is to be regretted that a bluejacket on the forecastle of the 'Goshawk,' exasperated at the inhuman conduct of the cruiser, threw a projectile, which could not possibly, under the circumstances, have exploded, into the boat as it drifted past the ship. This is, no doubt, the incident referred to by the German Minister at Copenhagen. It cannot be defended, but the act was done under considerable provocation, and was surely a venial offence compared with that of the German cruiser, which fired many shells at the

## 90 Heligoland to Keeling Island

British destroyers and boats while they were engaged in a humane and chivalrous action.

"The 'Defender,' which had drifted some distance from her boats, came under a very heavy fire, and her commanding officer, to save his ship, and in accordance with the orders he received to retire, abandoned his two boats, containing an officer and nine men and many prisoners. This scene was witnessed through his periscope by the Commanding Officer of submarine E 4,\* who proceeded to attack the cruiser, but the latter altered course to the northward before the submarine could be brought within range. After covering the retreat of the destroyer for some little time, E 4 returned to the boats and removed the British officers and men, and a German officer, a chief petty officer, and one man. E 4 might well have taken the other German officer and six unwounded men prisoners, but as the boats contained 18 very badly wounded Germans he humanely left the officer and men to care for them and navigate the boats. Before leaving, he saw that the boats were provided with water, biscuits, and a compass, and he gave the officer the position and course to Heligoland. The officer and men of the 'Defender,' while waiting for relief, stripped themselves of everything but their trousers, tearing up their clothes to serve as bandages for the wounded Germans.

"It might well be said that in carrying out this chivalrous action, the British destroyers ran unjustifiable risks, and the survivors of V 187 must, indeed, be ungrateful if they do not fully appreciate the treatment they received at the hands of our officers and men.

"These facts must be well known to the German

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\* Lieutenant-Commander Ernest W. Lair, who has since been specially promoted for this service.

Naval authorities, and if the statement of the German Minister is made in good faith, and if any of the survivors had bullet wounds, it can only be suggested, that the German officer, who was generously let free to take charge of his wounded men, misrepresented the facts.

"There is no evidence of the officers of V 187 having fired at their men, but there are many British Naval officers and men who actually saw officers of the 'Mainz' and 'Konigin Luise' fire at their men in the water, presumably because they were prematurely deserting their posts. There are many men in our hospitals whose wounds testify to the accuracy of the German officers' fire. About 350 officers and men were saved from the 'Mainz,' about 150 of whom were swimming in the water, some at least half a mile from the ship; many of the latter were wounded by revolver bullets. The remaining 200 men of the 'Mainz' could not be induced to jump overboard and were taken off by a destroyer which was laid alongside her just before she sank; these latter included over 60 badly wounded."

A day or two before the fight off Heligoland, the German Navy had sustained a serious blow by the loss of one of their very latest and best light cruisers, the "Magdeburg," under somewhat mysterious conditions. An official announcement dealing with this occurrence was issued by the German Admiralty on August 27th, and read as follows:

"The light cruiser 'Magdeburg' ran ashore in a fog on the island of Odensholm, at the entrance to the Gulf of Finland.

"Owing to the thick weather the other German



## 92 Heligoland to Keeling Island

warships in the vicinity were unable to render assistance, and, all efforts to refloat the vessel having failed, the captain decided to sacrifice her, as a superior Russian force was preparing to attack.

"Under heavy fire from the Russian fleet the majority of the cruiser's crew were saved by torpedo-boat V-26. Seventeen men were killed and twenty-five wounded. Eighty-five are missing, including the captain."

"The 'Magdeburg' was blown up. The survivors reached a German harbour to-day."

The lost cruiser was one of a group of four vessels launched in 1911, the "Breslau," in the Dardanelles, being a member of this group. The displacement is 4,500 tons, the speed  $27\frac{1}{2}$  knots and an armament of twelve 4.1-inch and two torpedo tubes is carried. The crew consisted of 373 officers and men.

Later reports showed that the "Magdeburg," after going ashore, was heavily shelled by two Russian armoured cruisers, which completed her destruction. They also took prisoner the captain and a large portion of the crew. This lends support to the theory that the German ship had, in fact, been run ashore by her own people after being attacked and severely punished by the Russian squadron. At all events the incident afforded welcome evidence of the activity of the Russian Fleet in the Baltic, which the Germans had given out as being completely bottled-up by their own superior numbers.

## CHAPTER V

### ROUNDING-UP THE COMMERCE RAIDERS

IMMEDIATELY after the declaration of war the British naval authorities took certain measures which were intended to ensure as far as possible the safety of the ocean trade routes. It is on these ocean highways and their freedom from molestation that the supply of food and raw material to the United Kingdom depends, and had the enemy been able to strike hard in this direction he would have stood to gain almost as much as by a British naval defeat in home waters.

There ~~is~~ no doubt whatever that elaborate preparations had been made by the German Admiralty, years before the war, for a sudden and sweeping assault on Britain's seaborne food supplies. Germany had not nearly enough regular cruisers with which to prosecute such a war on commerce, and her plans were greatly handicapped by the paucity of coaling stations under German control. To overcome these difficulties she resorted to the plan of supplying a large number of her merchant steamers with guns and ammunition, which were kept well out of sight in peace time, but could be instantly made use of when war broke out. Germany had previously reserved to herself the right,

## 94 Heligoland to Keeling Island

under international law, of converting merchantmen into warships on the high seas. This claim was strenuously resisted by British delegates at more than one international conference; but Germany stood out and refused to abandon what she considered a very valuable privilege.

It may never be known exactly how many German merchant vessels of all kinds, from the fast and stately Atlantic greyhound to the slower cargo-boat with a large coal capacity, had been supplied with guns. According to some authorities the list was a very long one, and comprised steamers belonging to every one of the leading German lines. But whether the number was large or small, evidence was speedily forthcoming that this menace to our shipping did indeed exist, although by its sealing of the exits from the North Sea the Grand Fleet prevented more than two or three such auxiliary ships from putting to sea. On the other hand Germany had a number of merchant ships already at large when the peace was broken, and these were converted into armed vessels for attacking, in association with her foreign service cruisers, British shipping.

Up to August 12th, little or nothing had been heard of any serious raid on British commerce. On that date the following important communication was issued by the Press Bureau :

“ At the request of the Foreign Office the Admiralty have considered attentively the position of Brazil, Uruguay, Argentina, and Chili with the intention of so concerting their naval measures as to protect and sustain British trade with those countries. They have full confidence in their ability to do this.

## Rounding-up Commerce Raiders 95

"Although the German Government are trying, and will try, to harass the trade routes and arrest the flow of commerce, their power to inflict injury diminishes with every day that passes. The Admiralty have already dispatched a large number of mobilised cruisers to their stations commanding the trade routes, thus nearly trebling the superior cruiser force already there.

"For example, there are already in the Atlantic twenty-four British cruisers, besides French, searching for the five German cruisers known to be in that ocean. Enemy vessels will be hunted continually, and although some time may elapse before they are run down, they will be kept too busy to do mischief.

"A number of fast merchant vessels, fitted out and armed in British naval arsenals, are being commissioned by the Admiralty for the purpose of patrolling the routes and keeping them clear of German commerce-raiders.

"Every effort is being made, with success, to facilitate trade in all directions. Although the principal difficulty was at the beginning, yet all British ships are arriving with the greatest regularity. With every day that passes the British Admiralty control of the trade routes, including especially the Atlantic trade routes, becomes stronger.

"Traders with Great Britain of all nations should therefore continue confidently and boldly to send their cargoes to sea in British or neutral ships, and British ships are themselves now plying the Atlantic routes with almost the same certainty as in times of peace.

"In the North Sea alone, where the Germans have scattered mines indiscriminately and where the most formidable operations of naval war are proceeding, the Admiralty can give no reassurance."

## 96 Helligoland to Keeling Island

Meanwhile, reports from other sources bore witness to the efforts which German men-of-war in the Atlantic were making to injure our shipping. Apart from the large number of British passenger and cargo steamers which are to be found in those waters at all seasons of the year, there were several ships of special importance known to be at sea, and some apprehension was felt for their safety. Among these vessels was the giant liner "Lusitania," one of the two fastest ocean steamers in the world. This great ship, as is well known, was built for the Cunard Company by arrangement with the Admiralty, and was ear-marked for service as an auxiliary cruiser in wartime. War had been declared before she left New York, but it was decided to risk the voyage for all that, and after an adventurous trip, during which all lights were extinguished, she reached Liverpool in safety.

Although the German would-be raiders eluded for some time the search made for them by our cruisers, it soon became evident that they were being kept continually on the run. From time to time came reports of duels between British and German ships in the Atlantic, but there was no official news of them. On arriving at Halifax, Nova Scotia, on August 13th, for example, the British cruiser "Suffolk" reported an encounter on the 7th, 200 miles south of Bermuda, between the British cruiser "Bristol" and the German cruiser "Karlsruhe." The "Suffolk" surprised the German ship coming from the North German Lloyd liner "Kronprinz Wilhelm," and at once gave chase. Admiral Sir Christopher Cradock

## Rounding-up Commerce Raiders 97

sent wireless orders to the "Bristol" and the "Berwick" to help her in the pursuit, and when the "Karlsruhe," owing to her superior speed, drew away from the "Suffolk," the "Bristol" picked her up and engaged her.

From an account attributed to an officer of the "Suffolk" it appears that the "Karlsruhe" and the "Bristol" were in action for about half an hour. For a few minutes the German stood by, and the ships fought broadside to broadside, the "Bristol" using her two 6-inch and five 4-inch guns against the "Karlsruhe's" five 4.1 guns. After a few minutes, however, the "Karlsruhe" turned and ran, whereupon the "Bristol" chased her, firing her forward 6-incher. It was difficult to make anything like good practice, as it was dark and the sea was heavy. Not one German shell landed anywhere near the "Bristol," but the crew of the latter believe that they got some shots aboard the "Karlsruhe." On the following day the "Suffolk" intercepted wireless messages between the German tank steamer "Leda" and some German cruisers. She thereupon broke in with her own wireless and ordered the "Leda" to stand by. The "Suffolk" came up with the "Leda" at night, and the German at once capitulated. A prize crew was sent on board, and she headed for Bermuda.

By a curious coincidence the two principals in this ocean duel, the "Bristol" and the "Karlsruhe," had exactly the same displacement, viz., 4,800 tons, and to that extent were equally matched, though the British ship was launched three years earlier than the German. In common

## 98 Heligoland to Keeling Island

with all German light cruisers, the "Karlsruhe" had a very weak armament, consisting only of twelve 4.1-inch quick-firers, which discharge a 35-lb. projectile. The "Bristol," on the other hand, carries two 6-inch, ten 4-inch, and four 3-pounder guns. The two 6-inch 100-pounder guns, one mounted forward, and one aft, enable her to hit much harder than the German ship, and this fact may have accounted for the ignominious flight of the "Karlsruhe," which was faster by nearly two knots.

Many people who failed to follow the late Lord Salisbury's advice to "consult large maps," and who evidently conceived the Atlantic Ocean to be a confined sheet of water which could be crossed and re-crossed in a very few days, grew impatient at the delay in "rounding up" and disposing of the German cruisers known to be at large. It has to be remembered, however, that distances in the Atlantic are enormous, and anything like a close patrol is out of the question. Merchant shipping, it is true, follows more or less closely defined routes in times of peace, and can thus be controlled to a certain extent, but during war it is no easy matter to ensure the safety of every merchant ship, unless her master conforms to Admiralty instruction, which, in very many cases, has not been the experience during the past three months.

During the middle and latter parts of August reports were circulated which showed that the route to the Cape was engaging the attention of the enemy's commerce-destroyers. Although few, if any actual losses were reported, several British

## Rounding-up Commerce Raiders 99

ships reported having been chased, and one or two were held up and searched. It became necessary to establish the complete safety of this route without delay, in view of its importance as one of our principal Imperial lines of communication. There is reason to suppose the British patrol in the waters concerned was strengthened accordingly, and the effect of this increased vigilance was manifested shortly after by a most welcome item of news. On August 27th the First Lord of the Admiralty made the following announcement in the House of Commons :

"The Admiralty have just received intelligence that the German armed merchant cruiser 'Kaiser Wilhelm der Grosse,' of 14,000 tons, armed with ten guns of approximately 4-inch calibre, has been sunk by H.M.S. 'Highflyer' off the West African coast. This is the vessel which has been endeavouring to arrest the traffic between this country and the Cape, and it is one of the very few German armed auxiliary cruisers which have succeeded in getting to sea. The survivors were landed before the vessel was sunk. Our losses are one killed and five slightly wounded."

A congratulatory message was despatched to the "Highflyer" and is given here :

"Admiralty to 'Highflyer.'—Bravo! You have rendered a service not only to Britain but to the peaceful commerce of the world. The German officers and crew appear to have carried out their duties with humanity and restraint, and are, therefore, worthy of all seamanlike consideration."

The "Highflyer" had performed an extremely



## 100 · Heligoland to Keeling Island

useful piece of work. She had disposed of one of the most formidable German auxiliary cruisers at large, and the relief felt by the shipping world was great. The immediate effect of the "Highflyer's" success was seen at Lloyd's, where the news was followed by a 25 per cent. drop in premiums on all vessels running to South Africa or to South America.

The "Highflyer" was scarcely the type of ship which had been expected to round up a vessel like the "Kaiser Wilhelm der Grosse," which in her day had held the blue ribbon of the Atlantic. Displacing 5,600 tons, the "Highflyer" is one of our older light cruisers, having been completed in 1900. She is armed with eleven 6-inch and nine smaller guns. She was doing duty as a training ship for cadets when the war opened.

The sunken German liner was a North German Lloyd vessel of nearly 14,000 tons, having been built by the Vulkan yard at Stettin in 1897. It seems certain that she was hastily armed and made ready for her mission of commerce-destruction, and had got safely to sea, several days before war broke out.

A graphic account of the manner in which she came to her end was supplied to the American Press by Captain Meyer, formerly captain of the sunken liner. He had contrived to escape after this action and reached New York in a fruit steamer, "nervè-racked and a mere shell of his former robust self," as one correspondent put it. He thus described the fate of his ship :

"We could do 21½ knots ordinarily, but we did not have enough steam to escape, and the cruiser

## Rounding-up Commerce Raiders 101

came down on us like a shot. When she was four miles away she landed a shot on our top deck amidships. If all the British ships shoot as straight as the 'Highflyer,' I shall be sorry for our poor fellows in the North Sea. I swung my ship around so that she was bow on to the cruiser and less of a mark, but the shells fell all around us. Great holes were soon torn in our hull, and water poured into several of them under the water-line. She began to list, and when I was certain she would not stay afloat but two or three minutes longer I called to all hands to jump overboard."

The actual scene of the engagement was Rio del Oro, in Spanish Africa. The fact that the German liner was in the act of coaling when she was surprised explains how it was that the British cruiser, which was at least two knots slower, was able to bring her to action and sink her.

Although the "Kaiser Wilhelm der Grosse" had been put out of the running, it was soon known that her short-lived career as a commerce-raider had not been entirely fruitless. Two British merchantmen had been captured and sunk by her, and others would certainly have shared the same fate had it not been for the humanity of the German commander, who allowed to go free several prizes because they had a large number of passengers, including women and children, on board. The Union Castle liner "Galician" was another of the ships to be held up by this commerce-raider, but she was fortunate enough to escape destruction thanks to the generosity of her captor. Leaving Cape Town on July 28th, the "Galician" had an uneventful voyage as far

## 102 Heligoland to Keeling Island

as Teneriffe. News had ere then been received of the war, and as a precautionary measure the captain requested passengers to draw curtains over the portholes at night and in other ways to reduce illumination as much as possible. The "Galician" did not keep to the regulation route home, but struck more to the west. A call at Teneriffe was to be abandoned, as there were rumours of two German cruisers in the vicinity of that island. When ninety miles off Teneriffe, smoke appeared on the horizon, and shortly afterwards "a black, ugly-looking, four-funnelled steamer" came alongside, flying the German flag.

The "Galician" was ordered to stop, and to refrain from using her wireless apparatus, but the operator was already sending out the "S.O.S." signal in the hope of bringing a British cruiser on the scene. Before he could complete the message, however, the Germans threatened to open fire unless the wireless were not instantly silent. Some of the officers then boarded the "Galician," demanding her papers. Passengers and crew were assembled on deck and scrutinised by the intruders, who, however, were scrupulously polite throughout the proceedings. They even refused to accept some cigars and cigarettes which were offered to them as a gift by the captain, saying that they did not want it to be reported that they had robbed the ship. Some of the German sailors had meanwhile been dismantling the wireless apparatus. Finally the party left, taking back with them to their ship two British Army men who were passengers on the "Galician." Before

## Rounding up Commerce Raiders 103

leaving the German officers shook hands with the captain and officers of the liner, and "apologised for the trouble they had given."

So excellent an impression had their good behaviour and courtesy made that they were cheered by the British passengers as they went over the side. The "Galician" was then ordered to follow the German cruiser, but early on the next morning the "Kaiser Wilhelm der Grosse" sent the following welcome signal: "On account of your women and children I will not sink the ship. You are released. Bon voyage!"

That the British Admiralty fully appreciated the considerate conduct of the German officers towards the "Galician" and other British ships they had captured was evident from the message of congratulation sent to H.M.S. "Highflyer," in which the German prisoners were mentioned as being "worthy of all seamanlike consideration."

In other quarters of the globe German cruisers had not been idle. But although there were at least half-a-dozen of these craft roaming the sea in search of British merchantmen, they did not at first appear to be able to make any serious impression on our trade. To this rule, however, there was one brilliant exception—the "Emden," a light cruiser of 3,600 tons, with a sea speed of 24 knots, and an armament of twelve 4.1-inch guns. Her maximum coal supply was 850 tons, and she carried a complement of 361 officers and men. The first news of this vessel was communicated in an Admiralty memorandum of September 20th, to the following effect:

## 104 Heligoland to Keeling Island

"On September 10th the German cruiser 'Emden,' from the China Station, after being completely lost for six weeks, appeared suddenly in the Bay of Bengal, and during the period September 10th to 14th captured six British ships, of which five were sunk and the sixth sent into Calcutta with the crews. The 'Emden' is now reported at Rangoon, and it is possible that she has made some other captures."

Unfortunately the contingency mentioned in this message proved only too well-founded. Since her first raid the "Emden" had made two other appearances in Indian waters, and managed to sink or capture several other British merchantmen.

Another commerce-raider which met with some success was the "Karlsruhe," whose engagement with H.M.S. "Bristol" we have referred to. Operating in the Southern Atlantic she managed to intercept and destroy upwards of a dozen British ships, most of which were plying between South American and home ports. Although no vessel of any very great value was captured, the aggregate tonnage represented by the lost ships was considerable, and some uneasiness was manifested in shipping and insurance circles when the weeks passed and found these dangerous German corsairs still at large.

It was to allay such apprehensions and also to explain to the public the facts of the situation regarding the hunt for the German raiders that the Admiralty published on October 24th the following very interesting statement :

"Eight or nine German cruisers are believed to

## Rounding-up Commerce Raiders 100

be at large in the Atlantic, the Pacific, and the Indian Oceans. Searching for these vessels and working in concert under the various Commanders-in-Chief are upwards of seventy British (including Australian), Japanese, French, and Russian cruisers, not including auxiliary cruisers. Among these are a number of the fastest British cruisers.

"The vast expanses of sea and ocean and the many thousand islands of the archipelagos offer an almost infinite choice of movement to the enemy's ships. In spite of every effort to cut off their coal supply, it has hitherto been maintained by one means or another in the face of increasing difficulties.

"The discovery and destruction of these few enemy cruisers is therefore largely a matter of time, patience, and good luck. The public should have confidence that the Commanders-in-Chief and the experienced captains serving under them are doing all that is possible and taking the best steps to bring the enemy to action.

"They have so far been also occupied in very serious and important convoy duty, but this work has somewhat lessened and the number of searching cruisers is continually augmented.

"Meanwhile, merchant ships must observe Admiralty instructions, which it is obviously impossible to specify, and use all the precautions which have been suggested. On routes where these instructions have been followed they have so far proved very effective. On the other hand, where they have been disregarded captures have been made.

"The same vastness of sea which has so far enabled the German cruisers to avoid capture will protect the trade. The only alternative to the method now adopted would be the marshalling of merchant men in regular convoys at stated intervals. So far it has not been thought necessary to hamper trad

## 106 Heligoland to Keeling Island

by enforcing such a system. The percentage of loss is much less than was reckoned on before the war. Out of 4,000 British ships engaged in foreign trade only 39 have been sunk by the enemy, or just under 1 per cent. in all.

"The rate of insurance for cargoes which, on the outbreak of war was fixed at 5 guineas per cent., has now been reduced to 2 guineas per cent., without injury to the solvency of the fund. For hulls, as apart from cargoes, the insurance has also been considerably reduced. Between 8,000 and 9,000 foreign voyages have been undertaken to and from United Kingdom ports, less than 5 per 1,000 of which have been interfered with, and of these losses a large number have been caused by merchant vessels taking everything for granted and proceeding without precautions, as if there were no war.

"On the other hand, the German overseas trade has practically ceased to exist. Nearly all their fast ships which could have been used as auxiliary cruisers were promptly penned into neutral harbours or have taken refuge in their own. Among the comparatively few German ships which have put to sea 133 have been captured, or nearly four times the number of those lost by the very large British mercantile marine.

"In these circumstances there is no occasion for anxiety and no excuse for complaint. On the contrary, the more fully the facts concerning our overseas trade and its protection by the Royal Navy can be disclosed, and the more attentively they are studied the greater will be the confidence and satisfaction with which the situation can be viewed."

As an offset to the visitations of the "Emden" and "Karlsruhe" came the welcome news of the successful action fought by the "Carmania"

## Rounding-up Commerce Raiders 107

against the German armed merchant cruiser "Cap Trafalgar." The Admiralty announcement, made on September 20th, was as follows :

"The British auxiliary cruiser 'Carmania,' Captain Noel Grant, Royal Navy, went into action on September 14th off the east coast of South America with a German armed merchant cruiser, supposed to be the 'Cap Trafalgar' or 'Berlin,' mounting eight 4-inch guns and pom-poms.

"The action lasted one hour and forty-five minutes, when the German ship capsized and sank, her survivors being rescued by an empty collier.

"Of the crew of the 'Carmania' nine men were killed, five men seriously injured, and twenty-one men slightly wounded. None of the officers were injured.

"The First Lord has sent the following telegram to Captain Noel Grant, Royal Navy, of the 'Carmania': 'Well done! You have fought a fine action to a successful finish.'"

The "Carmania" is an ocean liner of 19,500 tons, owned by the Cunard Company. She was completed in 1905, and has a speed of 18 knots. We are not told what guns were put aboard this ship when she was taken over by the Admiralty, but her armament is scarcely likely to have been more powerful than that of her antagonist, which mounted eight 4-in. guns and pom-poms. The "Cap Trafalgar," whose identity was confirmed later, was a crack ship, built in 1913 for the Hamburg-South American Steamship Co., her tonnage being 18,710 tons, and her speed 18 knots. The two ships were, therefore, not unequally matched, and the decisive result of the duel which ended with the capsizing of the German



## 108 Heligoland to Keeling Island

was a fine tribute to the courage and skill of the "Carmania's" officers and men.

This action was particularly interesting and significant because it happened to be the first in which British and German ships had met on equal terms. Both vessels were manned almost entirely by naval reservists of the two Powers concerned. No one can doubt that the congratulatory message sent by the Admiralty to the "Carmania" was thoroughly well deserved. The "Carmania" was the ship which distinguished herself by the work she did in rescuing the passengers and crew of the burning liner "Volturno." Her captain on that occasion, Captain James Barr, was on board as second-in-command when the "Carmania" fought her brilliant little action with the "Cap Trafalgar."

The German armed liner was engaged and sent to the bottom before she had been able to work the least injury to British shipping. A few weeks before her destruction she had arrived in South America with arms and stores for other German merchant cruisers, and the subsequent report of her departure, fully armed and equipped for commerce destruction, caused some apprehensions. These were happily allayed by the fine achievement of the "Carmania," whose prompt and decisive action removed a serious menace to the security of the highly important trade routes between this country and South America.

The official narrative of the "Carmania's" duel, as issued by the Admiralty, is subjoined :

" Shortly after 11 a.m. we made out a vessel, and on nearer approach we saw there were three steamers

## Rounding up Commerce Raiders 109

—one a large liner, the others colliers: the latter had derricks topped and were probably working when we hove in sight. Before we had raised their hulls they had separated and were making off in different directions. The large vessel was apparently about our own size, with two funnels painted to resemble a Castle liner.

"After running away for a little while, the large steamer turned to starboard and headed towards us; he was then steering about south and we were steering about south-west. The weather was fine and sunny, with a moderate breeze from north-east. Our speed was 16 knots and his apparently about 18.

"At 8,500 yards we fired a shot across his bows, and he immediately opened fire from his starboard after gun. We opened with all port guns, and the firing became general.

"We were now well within range and most of his shots going over, consequently our rigging, masts, funnels, derricks, and ventilators all suffered; he was then well open on our port side, all our port guns and his starboard guns engaged and firing rapidly. Owing to decreasing range his machine guns were becoming particularly dangerous, so ship was turned away from him and range opened; ship continued to turn until starboard battery was engaged. Two of our hits were seen to take his deck steam pipes, he was well on fire forward, and had a slight list to starboard.

"One of his shells had passed through the cabin under our fore-bridge, and although it did not burst it started a fire which became rapidly worse, no water being available owing to the fireman having been shot through and the chemical fire extinguisher proving of very little use. The fire got such a firm hold that the fore-bridge had to be abandoned and the ship coned from aft, using the lower steering position.

## 110 Heligoland to Keeling Island

"At this time the enemy was on our starboard with a heavy list to starboard, and at 1.50 p.m., or one hour and forty minutes from firing of the first shot, she capsized to starboard and went down bows first with colours flying.

"It was some time before we got the fire under, which necessitated keeping the ship before the wind, and consequently we could not go to the assistance of the survivors, some of whom got away in boats and were picked up by one of the colliers.

"The enemy before sinking was in wireless communication with some German vessel, and as smoke was seen in the northern horizon and the signalman thought he could make out a cruiser's funnels we went on full speed to the southward."

"When we were in touch with 'Cornwall' we asked him to meet us, as ship was unseaworthy and practically all communications and navigational instruments were destroyed, rendering the conning and navigation of the ship difficult and uncertain. On the 15th at 4.30 p.m. the 'Bristol' picked us up and escorted us until relieved by the 'Cornwall,' who took us on to an anchorage to effect temporary repairs.

"Seventy-nine projectiles hit the ship, making 304 holes."

During October, the German cruiser "Emden" again came into prominence. Although a number of British, French, Russian and Japanese warships, including several of high speed, were scouring the seas far and wide, she still managed to elude pursuit, and even found time to work more mischief. Finding the Indian Ocean too hot for her, she turned east, and all trace of her was lost until October 21st. On that date,

## Rounding-up Commerce Raiders 111

however, she suddenly appeared at Penang, and brought off the most daring and dramatic coup of her adventurous career. Lying in the roadstead at Penang was the Russian light cruiser "Jemtchug," of 3,100 tons, and the French torpedo-boat-destroyer "Mousquet." The "Emden" arrived at daybreak, when a thick mist hung over the water. She had rigged up a dummy funnel, and, owing to this disguise, was able to come in without exciting suspicion, as the patrol boats took her for a British or Japanese cruiser. According to the story subsequently told by eye-witnesses she replied to the "Jemtchug's" challenge with "'Yarmouth' coming to anchorage," and swinging her stern in towards the Russian cruiser, fired a torpedo which struck the "Jemtchug" amidships. She then poured broadsides into the doomed vessel, which quickly foundered. A second torpedo destroyed the French destroyer. So swiftly was the attack delivered that the "Emden" had turned and was racing off at top speed almost before a single shot had been fired at her. :

After this exploit she again disappeared for a week or two, but her hour was fast approaching. According to a statement subsequently issued by the Admiralty, a "large combined operation by fast cruisers" had been in progress against the elusive raider for some time, and in this search, which covered an immense area, our cruisers—the Australian ships "Melbourne" and "Sydney" among them—were assisted by French, Russian, and Japanese vessels working

## 112 Heligoland to Keeling Island

in harmony. The welcome news of the long-expected "kill" was finally received on November 9th, and on the following day was announced to the public in an Admiralty statement.

From this it appeared that the "Emden," which had been "completely lost" after her raid at Penang, had arrived at Keeling-Cocos Island and landed an armed party to destroy the wireless station and cut the cable. It was while her boats were returning from this expedition that the smoke of H.M.A.S. "Sydney" appeared on the horizon. As the Australian ship was faster by at least two knots, and was coming up at full speed, escape was impossible. So for the last time Captain Karl von Müller, the gallant commander of the "Emden," cleared for action and prepared to fight to a finish. Various reports agree that the action was fought with courage and determination on both sides. The German ship was overwhelmed by the fire of the "Sydney's" 6-inch guns, to which she could reply only with her ten 4.1-inch quickfirers. In the end, when 200 of her crew had been killed and 30 wounded, she was driven ashore and burnt. The "Sydney" suffered a loss of only 3 killed and 15 wounded, the disparity between the two casualty lists being due, no doubt, to the heavier metal of the Australian ship. Much gratification was expressed in England when it became known that Captain von Müller—the son of an English mother and the husband of an English wife, it is reported—himself had escaped injury and was a prisoner. In spite of the severe damage he had inflicted on our shipping, there was a

## Rounding-up Commerce Raiders 113

notable absence of ill-feeling against this officer, who throughout his operations exhibited courtesy and consideration towards his victims, and the Admiralty voiced British public opinion when they directed that all honours of war were to be accorded to the survivors of the "Emden," and that the captain and officers were not to be deprived of their swords.

To the "Sydney" and to the Commonwealth Navy Board the First Lord of the Admiralty sent the following message :

" Warmest congratulations on the brilliant entry of the Australian Navy into the war, and the signal service rendered to the Allied cause and to peaceful commerce by the destruction of the ' Emden.' "

From beginning to end this single German cruiser had sunk shipping which represented an aggregate tonnage of the value of about £4,150,000. That he had accomplished this wholesale destruction without taking a single life said much for the skill and humane conduct of the commander, his officers and men.

The news of the close of the " Emden's " career was received with great enthusiasm and relief at Lloyd's, for her depredations had been the talk of the insurance market for the previous two months and had not been without their effect on premium rates.

It is interesting to note that among the officers serving under Captain von Müller was Lieutenant Prince Francis Joseph of Hohenzollern, who is a member of the elder, but non-regnant, branch

## 114 Heligoland to Keeling Island

of the German Emperor's family. He is the second son of Prince William Hohenzollern, and is twenty-three years of age. He, too, survived the action with the "Sydney," and became a prisoner of war.

The "Sydney," which so effectively put an end to the career of the "Emden," is a light cruiser of 5,600 tons. She was built at Glasgow, and launched in 1911. Turbines of 22,000 h.p. give her a speed of twenty-six knots, which she easily made on trial. The armament consists of eight 6-inch and four 3-pounder quick-firing guns, and there are two submerged torpedo-tubes. A complement of 400 officers and men is carried.

The official statement of this affair also contained the welcome news that a second marauding German cruiser had been accounted for. This was the "Königsberg," which had attacked and disabled the "Pegasus" at Zanzibar on September 19th, as already narrated. Her action on that occasion revealed her whereabouts, with the result that a concentration of fast cruisers was arranged by the Admiralty in East African waters, and a thorough and prolonged search by vessels in combination was made.

This search, continued the official statement, resulted on October 30th in the "Königsberg" being discovered by H.M.S. "Chatham" (Captain Sidney R. Drury-Lowe, R.N.) hiding in shoal water about 6 miles up the Rufigi River, opposite Mafia Island (German East Africa).

"Owing to her greater draught, the 'Chatham' could not reach the 'Königsberg,' which is probably

## Rounding-up Commerce Raiders 115

aground, except at high water. Part of the crew of the 'Königsberg' is landed and entrenched on the banks of the river.

"Both the entrenchments and the 'Königsberg' have been bombarded by the 'Chatham,' but owing to the dense palm groves amid which the ship lies, it is not possible to estimate the damage. Pending operations for her capture or destruction, effective steps have been taken to block the 'Königsberg' in by sinking colliers in the only navigable channel, and she is now imprisoned and unable to do any further harm.

"The fast vessels which had been searching for her are thus released for other service."

The "Königsberg," apart from her action with the "Pegasus," had sunk only one British steamer, and that within two days after war was declared. But it was none the less satisfactory to know that she had been rounded-up and deprived of her capacity for mischief. She was a light cruiser similar to the "Emden," but somewhat older. Her displacement was 3,400 tons, and her best speed 24.1 knots. She was armed with ten 4-inch and two machine guns.

In announcing the fate of these two corsairs the Admiralty added that, "with the exception of the German squadron off the coast of Chili, the whole of the Pacific and Indian Oceans are now clear of the enemy's warships."

The exploits of the German commerce-raiders no doubt furnished exasperating reading to merchants and shipowners, but it should not be forgotten that the damage which they were able to inflict in the course of their sporadic raids was



## 116 Heligoland to Keeling Island

insignificant when the vast dimensions of British maritime commerce are taken into consideration. The failure of Germany's cruisers and armed liners seriously to interfere with that commerce has been one of the most striking features of the war at sea. It is common knowledge that the enemy cherished great hopes in this direction, and the virtual failure of his commerce-raiding plans must have been an exceedingly bitter disappointment.

When war broke out the "Emden" was a unit of the German Squadron in China. Recognising, no doubt, the futility of retaining a light cruiser, weakly armed, for the purpose of defending the base at Tsingtau against the pending attack by the Japanese, the commander-in-chief of the German Squadron appears to have detached the "Emden" on a roving commission, with orders to do as much harm as possible to British trade and ports before being "rounded-up."

It would be interesting to learn her movements during these forty-two days that she was "lost"—to quote the Admiralty's admission. That she captured or sunk no British shipping is certain, in spite of the circumstance that her speed of 24 knots would have enabled her to overhaul with ease any merchantman she sighted. The most probable explanation of her inaction during this period is that she found the Chinese Seas too closely patrolled by the vessels of our China Squadron to offer any opportunity of successful raiding. Accordingly she headed for the Indian Ocean, where the local British Squadron did not contain ships as fast and as powerful as those on

## Rounding-up Commerce Raiders 117

the China Station, and, fortune favouring her, the "Emden" was able to operate with some success.

The lesson to be drawn from these episodes is the vital necessity of having at hand near all important strategical points on the ocean highways of the British Empire one or two cruisers at least as fast as those which are maintained on foreign service by our potential enemies. The value of high speed in warships of the cruiser type was conclusively demonstrated by the "Emden" and the one or two other German ships which managed to inflict damage on British merchant shipping.

It must not be supposed that the losses in this war against commerce are all on the British side. This is far from being the case. The fact is that Germany suffered to an infinitely greater extent.

On November 27th, the Board of Trade issued a highly interesting statement concerning the condition of British and German shipping, after about 100 days of war. It showed, at a glance, how effectively the Navy had swept German merchant vessels from the seas, while holding the ocean highways secure for British ships. The statement was limited to steamships of over 100 tons gross, of which, at the beginning of the war, Great Britain possessed 10,123, of a total gross tonnage of 20,523,706, and Germany 2,090, aggregating 5,134,720 tons gross. Briefly, the position with regard to these was as follows:

# 118 Heligoland to Keeling Island

## BRITAIN.

	Total ships.	Captured, detained, etc.	Plying.
Number of ships - -	10,123	195	9,928
Gross tonnage -	20,523,706	585,551	20,122,173
Percentage of number -	100	1.9	98.1
Percentage of tonnage -	100	2.9	97.1

## GERMANY.

	Total ships.	Captured, detained, etc.	Plying or unaccounted for.
Number of ships - -	2,090	1,221	869
Gross tonnage -	5,134,720	4,584,926	549,794
Percentage of number -	100	58.4	41.6
Percentage of tonnage -	100	89.3	10.7

• Following are particulars of the vessels captured or detained :

## Rounding-up Commerce Raiders 119

### BRITISH.

Captured	-	-	-	-	-	-	49
Detained in German ports	-	-	-	-	-	-	75
Held up in Baltic and Black Sea	-	-	-	-	-	-	71
							<hr/>
Total	-	-	-	-	-	-	195

### GERMAN.

Captured	-	-	-	-	-	-	80
Detained in British or Allied ports	-	-	-	-	-	-	166
Seeking refuge in neutral ports	-	-	-	-	-	-	646
In German ports	-	-	-	-	-	-	329
							<hr/>
Total	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,221

It will be noted that the whole of the British ships not captured or detained, representing 98.1 per cent. of the total and 97.1 per cent. of the aggregate tonnage, were keeping the seas. On the other hand, of the 869 German ships not captured or detained, only ten were known to be at sea.

Among the German losses enumerated above are included a "haul" of nine large steamers made off the Cameroon River by H.M.S. "Cumberland" (Captain Cyril Fuller) at the end of September. The total tonnage of these prizes was 30,915. The vessels were in good order, most of them containing general outward and homeward cargoes and considerable quantities of coal. On the same occasion the "Cumberland" captured a small steamer converted into a gunboat, the "Soden," which has since been commissioned for service under the British flag.

No fewer than eight of the "Cumberland's"

## 120 Heligoland to Keeling Island

prizes belonged to the Woermann Line, the largest German shipping company which operates between Germany and the West Coast of Africa. It has a capital of 20,000,000 marks (one million sterling). The aggregate gross tonnage of the thirty-nine sea-going vessels which constitute the Woermann fleet is given in the official year-book "Nauticus," as 112,616. As the total gross tonnage of the eight Woermann ships seized by his Majesty's ship "Cumberland" amounted to 28,016, it will be seen that at one stroke the Woermann Company lost almost exactly 25 per cent. of its whole fleet. This fact strikingly illustrates the enormous damage which the German mercantile marine has sustained in the present war.

The Woermann Company, by the way, has a large coal and oil depot at Las Palmas, in the Canaries. This establishment had been greatly extended during the last two years, and was doubtless intended for service in war as a fuel base for German commerce-raiders.

A sister ship of the "Cumberland," H.M.S. "Berwick" (Captain Lewis C. Baker) succeeded in running to earth and capturing another of the commerce-raiders on September 12th. This was the Hamburg-American liner "Spreewald," a vessel of 3,900 tons, which was known to be fitted as an armed merchant cruiser. At the same time two colliers were captured with coal for the German cruisers operating in Atlantic waters. The vessels had between them 6,000 tons of coal and 100 tons of provisions.

The discovery and destruction of the other German corsairs still at large is, in the words

## **Rounding-up Commerce Raiders 121**

of the Admiralty's statement, "largely a matter of time, patience, and good luck." The ocean is wide, and the number of cruisers at the disposal of Great Britain and her Allies is not unlimited. When we reflect on the enormous damage which a single ship, the "Alabama," was able to inflict before she was run down by Federal warships, we can only marvel at the comparative insignificance of the loss which British shipping has sustained at the hands of the German cruisers.

## CHAPTER VI

### END OF GERMANY'S COLONIAL EMPIRE

THE truly world-wide nature of the war was brought home to the nation by reports which began to arrive, shortly after the declaration of hostilities, of operations against the Colonial Possessions of the German Empire. The first report of this character was issued on August 8th as follows :

"Acting on instructions from the Secretary of State for the Colonies, the British Forces in the Gold Coast Colony yesterday seized the port of Lome, in German Togoland, on the West Coast of Africa. No resistance was offered, and South Togoland up to 120 kilometres north from the coast was simultaneously surrendered."

German Togoland has an area of more than 33,000 square miles, and includes Little Popo and Porto Seguro. On the west it is bounded by the British Gold Coast Colony, on the east by French Dahomey. It has a population of approximately, 1,000,000, of whom 350 were German officials and settlers. From this colony Germany exported produce to the annual value of £350,000. A good deal of capital had been expended on the exploitation of its resources, and high hopes were

## End of Germany's Colonies 123

placed on the future development of the territory. The functions of governorship were carried out by Duke Adolphus Frederick of Mecklenburg.

Although the Admiralty statement afforded no clue to the part which the Navy played in the seizure of this German colony, it is obvious that naval assistance was given to the expedition. No oversea operation, indeed, is possible, unless the Navy can give safe conduct.

A day or two previously the British cruiser, "Pegasus," of heroic memory, had destroyed the German wireless station at Dar-es-Salam, the only sheltered port in German East Africa. A floating dock and the German surveying ship "Moewe" were sunk in the harbour. This operation, minor in itself, was nevertheless of great importance, for it severed communications between German East Africa and Europe and thus isolated an important German colony. Moreover, it was known that German commerce-destroyers were depending on their wireless stations on the East and West African Coasts for information as to the whereabouts of British cruisers. Hence the destruction of the wireless station at Dar-es-Salam was one of the first blows which the British Navy struck at these raiders.

Towards the end of August a further move was made in the same direction, and people at home were reminded of the activity of the naval forces which the self-governing Dominions had placed unreservedly at the disposal of the British Admiralty on the outbreak of war. A telegram from the Governor of New Zealand stated that Apia, in German Samoa, surrendered at 10 a.m.



## 124 Heligoland to Keeling Island

on the 29th August to an expeditionary force sent by the Government of New Zealand.

For the past thirty-five years Germany had been connected with Samoa, for it was in 1879 that Bismarck annexed Saluafata harbour. In order to prevent a German monopoly of the islands, Great Britain shortly afterwards annexed some of the territory. Germany was not long in finding that her new acquisition was likely to prove somewhat troublesome. In 1887 civil war broke out, largely due to German intrigue against British influence. The Germans lost certain sailors killed and wounded, and, incidentally, got one of their first tastes of colonial warfare. It is a fact that countless articles and several bulky volumes have been penned by zealous patriots in the Fatherland about these insignificant operations. Such effusions were, no doubt, written in order to stimulate public interest at home in the romance of colonial expansion. Be that as it may, under German rule, the two largest islands of the Samoan group, Savaii and Upolu, never thrived to any remarkable extent, and there can be no doubt that the inhabitants and European settlers stand to benefit greatly from the recent change to British rule.

Apart altogether from the usefulness of the work performed, this smart exploit by the New Zealanders aroused much enthusiasm throughout that country. New Zealand has had, in truth, ample cause to be proud of the part she has been playing in this great world-drama. Thanks to her splendid patriotism and self-denial, which in 1909 led her to offer a Dreadnought to the

## End of Germany's Colonies 125

Mother Country, and later to place the vessel unconditionally at the disposal of the Admiralty, for service in European waters if need be, the honour fell to New Zealand of being the only British Dominion to be represented in the Grand Fleet. The ship which she had so generously provided for the common defence of the Empire was the battle-cruiser "New Zealand." This vessel, as a unit of the First Battle-Cruiser Squadron, took part in the brilliant fight off Heligöland and helped to destroy the German light cruisers "Köln" and "Ariadne."

Inspired to emulation, as it were, by the exploits of their comrades of New Zealand, the Australian Navy lost no time in reminding all, whom it might concern that it, too, was an indispensable link in the world-encircling chain of British sea-power. On September 12th and the following day, telegrams from Vice-Admiral Sir George Fatey, commanding the Royal Australian Navy, announced the success of a skilful operation against Herbertshöhe, in New Pommern (late New Britain), the largest island in the Bismarck Archipelago, lying due east from German New Guinea. According to this official account, a naval landing party, under Commander J. A. H. Beresford, Australian Navy, established themselves on shore at dawn, without the enemy's knowledge. The British flag was hoisted over the town without opposition, but to reach the wireless station the expedition had to fight its way for eighteen hours through six miles of bush, and along a track which had been mined at several points. Five hundred yards

## 126 Heligoland to Keeling Island

from the station the Germans were entrenched, but the officer in command surrendered unconditionally. The wireless tower and station were found to have been damaged by the enemy and remained out of action for some time. The British casualties included two officers and four seamen, Australian Naval Reserve, killed, and one officer and three seamen wounded. Besides seventy-three prisoners, the enemy lost between twenty and thirty killed.

The group of islands formerly known as the New Britain Archipelago was at one time a British Possession, but in 1884 it was assigned by agreement to Germany and renamed the Bismarck Archipelago.

Further progress in German New Guinea was reported later on in the month, a despatch, published on September 26th, stating that the town and harbour of Friedrich Wilhelm, the seat of government of Kaiser Wilhelm's Land, German New Guinea, had been occupied by the Australian forces without opposition. The armed forces of the enemy appear to have been concentrated at Herbertshöhe, where they were annihilated. The British flag was hoisted at Friedrich Wilhelm, and a garrison established there.

Yet another self-governing Dominion was to strike a blow at the vanishing colonial empire which Germany had striven so zealously and so unsuccessfully to create as a sign of her claim to recognition as a "World-Power." A force dispatched by the South African Union anchored off Lüderitzbucht (Lüderitz Bay), one of the two

## End of Germany's Colonies 127

natural harbours in German South West Africa, on September 18th, and summoned the town to surrender. The demand was immediately complied with, the main German garrison having apparently retreated the previous day, and the Union Jack was soon flying over the town hall.

Although a new artificial harbour has been created at Swakopmund, Lüderitzbucht still retains much of its importance. Near it are the diamond fields, discovered a few years ago, and from which in 1912 stones to the value of almost one million sterling were taken. It is also the coastal terminus of the railway from Keetmanshoop, completed in 1908. This line has a total length of 1,300 miles, and since its completion the trade of Lüderitzbucht has rapidly developed. The diamond industry has been, in the past, a monopoly of the South-West Africa Company, practically a Government syndicate.

In 1913, the European population of German South-West Africa numbered 14,816, of whom 12,290 were Germans. A military force of about 3,000 men, including police, was maintained there in the same year.

The impotent fury with which the Germans witnessed these successive seizures of their oversea territory may easily be imagined. They had always calculated that in such a war as this it would be Great Britain, not Germany, which would see its colonies vanish one by one. There is good reason for believing our enemy had relied implicitly on the theory that as soon as we became involved in a big European struggle, the British self-governing Dominions would at

## 128 Heligoland to Keeling Island

once declare their independence, and our Crown Colonies and other possessions would be lost to us by internal rebellion. It says little for the intelligence of the German political writers that they should have preached such fantastic legends to their countrymen year in and year out. When the matter was put to the test, Germany found how utterly futile her calculations had been. She it was that had to stand impotent while colony after colony was snatched from her grasp, and the irony of the situation was that this work was being performed for the most part by expeditions from the very British Dominions which were expected to "cut the painter" as soon as the Mother Country became preoccupied with a war in Europe.

On or about September 18th, the Australian Navy had to deplore the loss of a new and valuable unit, one of the two submarines which had been built in England for the Commonwealth Fleet, and sent out to the Antipodes under their own power. The ill-fated boat was Submarine A E 1. It will probably never be known exactly why she went to the bottom, but, according to an official message, the loss was due to an accident. There was no sea running at the time when she was lost, and no enemy was in the neighbourhood. The Australian Naval Board reported that the water where the boat was last seen was very deep, and that there was consequently no hope of locating the wreck. "If," it was added, "the A E 1 sank in that spot, death would have been mercifully sudden."

• The lost boat was similar in design to the

## End of Germany's Colonies 129

British "E" submarines. Her displacement when submerged was about 800 tons, and when travelling on the surface she could develop a speed of 15 knots. The armament consisted of tubes for discharging the latest type of torpedo. She was built by Messrs. Vickers at their Barrow yard in 1913, and left Portsmouth on March 2nd, 1914, for Sydney, in company with a sister-boat, the A E 2. During the long voyage of 12,500 miles, which both boats covered entirely by their own power, and under the escort of a light cruiser, the A E 1 was commanded by Lieut.-Commander Thomas F. Besant, with a crew of twenty-nine, nine of whom were native-born Australians. The journey was an immense success, both boats and their crews arriving at Sydney in the best of condition after undergoing an endurance test which completely eclipsed all previous records of submarine navigation. Lieut.-Commander Thomas F. Besant, who perished with his boat, was a nephew of the late Sir Walter Besant, the novelist.

When the A E 1 disappeared it is stated that she had thirty-five persons on board. The loss of all these valuable lives, together with that of the boat itself, was greatly deplored, more especially as it was the result of an accident which occurred before the submarine had enjoyed an opportunity of trying its torpedoes against an enemy ship.

A brief account of some exciting incidents on the African Coast was given in an Admiralty communiqué on September 20th, as follows:—

"His Majesty's ship 'Cumberland,' Captain Cyril

## 130 Heligoland to Keeling Island

T. M. Fuller, Royal Navy, reports from the Cameroon River that a German steamboat on the night of September 14th, attempted to sink His Majesty's gunboat 'Dwarf,' Commander Frederick E. K. Strong, Royal Navy, with an infernal machine in the bows. The attempt failed, and the steamboat with one prisoner was captured.

"On the night of September 16th, the 'Dwarf' was purposely rammed by the 'Nachtigall,' a German merchant ship. The 'Dwarf' was slightly damaged, but sustained no casualties. The 'Nachtigall' was wrecked. The enemy lost four white men and ten coloured men, and eight white men and fourteen coloured men missing.

"A further report received from H.M.S. 'Cumberland' to-day states that two German launches, one carrying explosive machines, were destroyed, the enemy's losses being one white man killed and three white men and two natives taken prisoners."

Although of no great importance in themselves, these incidents were significant as showing the determination of the enemy in that quarter to damage the British by any and every means in his power. The attempts to sink H.M. gunboat "Dwarf" and H.M.S. "Cumberland," made by a German steamboat and launches with "infernal machines" in the bows, was evidently a revival of the spar torpedo. This weapon, in the hands of resolute men and under certain favourable conditions, is still extremely formidable, in spite of its complete supersession by the automobile torpedo.

The spar torpedo claimed many victims during the American Civil War, the Russo-Turkish War, and several minor campaigns. It has the

## End of Germany's Colonies 131

advantage that the necessary apparatus can be improvised at short notice, and that it can be used from the smallest steam-launch. But those who make use of it carry their lives in their hands. The machine consists of a metal drum or barrel filled with some explosive and attached to one end of a long spar or boom, which projects from the bow of the attacking boat. If fortune favours the enterprise, the night being dark and the enemy lacking in vigilance, the boat approaches to within a few feet of the ship to be attacked, when the spar is dipped, and the torpedo, now in contact with the enemy's side several feet below the water, exploded by electricity or percussion. With a sufficiently heavy charge of explosive this method of attack might well cause fatal damage even to a large warship. The Germans appear to have used a large steam-boat for making the attack on H.M.S. "Dwarf." Happily it miscarried, as was to be expected in view of the sharp look-out which is kept by British ships in war-time, and the audacious attackers suffered heavily, having no fewer than thirty-eight casualties, including sixteen white men.

The ramming of H.M. gunboat "Dwarf" by the German merchant steamer "Nachtigall" was another desperate manoeuvre, which might well have succeeded against an opponent less ready to meet every emergency. It is impossible not to admire the courage and determination of the Germans who made these repeated attempts, each of which was a forlorn hope. They were obviously quite prepared to sacrifice their lives



## 182 Heligoland to Keeling Island

if only they could succeed in damaging a unit of the British Navy, although they must have known that their success could not have had the remotest effect on the naval issue as a whole.

Whilst the campaign against Germany's over-sea possessions was being carried out, important events were taking place in the Far East. The circumstances in which Japan felt herself compelled to intervene in the struggle in favour of her British Ally have been fully set forth in "The Fleets at War." When the rupture between Great Britain and Germany took place both nations had powerful naval forces in Far Eastern waters, though the British squadron was superior alike in numbers and in material.

It included one battleship, the "Triumph," of 11,985 tons and 20 knots speed, armed with four 10-inch and fourteen 7.5-inch guns, with many smaller weapons; the flagship "Minotaur," an armoured cruiser of 14,600 tons and 23 knots speed, carrying four 9.2-inch, ten 7.5-inch, and sixteen 12-pounder guns; the armoured cruiser "Hampshire," displacing 10,850 tons, with a speed of 23 knots and a battery of four 7.5-inch, six 6-inch, and twenty 3-pounder guns; and the light cruisers "Newcastle" and "Yarmouth," both of high speed, the first carrying two 6-inch and ten 4-inch, and the second eight 6-inch guns. There were, besides, eight destroyers, all of the "River" class, four old torpedo-boats, three submarines, and a large number of gunboats and sloops possessing but little fighting value.

The China Squadron thus represented a very formidable unit. In case of need it could look

## End of Germany's Colonies 133

for reinforcement to the Australian Fleet, which had been mobilised and placed unconditionally at the disposal of the British Admiralty immediately war was declared. The flagship of this Fleet is the "Australia," a battle-cruiser of the same type as the "Indefatigable," with a speed of 28 knots and a main battery of eight 12-inch guns. Other vessels in commission were the light cruisers "Sydney" (which won her laurels, as described in another chapter, by the destruction of the "Emden"), "Melbourne," and "Encounter," the destroyers "Parramatta," "Warrego," and "Yarra," and the two submarines of the latest type already mentioned.

Germany's Far Eastern Fleet was small in comparison with ours, but by no means insignificant. It consisted of the two fine sister-ships, "Scharnhorst" and "Gneisenau," each displacing 11,250 tons, with a speed of 23 knots. These armoured cruisers carried a battery of eight 8.2-inch, six 6-inch, and eighteen smaller guns apiece, and were well protected with armour over vital parts. The "Scharnhorst" bore the flag of the German commander-in-chief on the station. Other vessels of the German squadron were the light cruisers "Emden" and "Nürnberg," seven gunboats, and one old destroyer. It is understood that several of the smaller craft besides the "Emden" were despatched on the outset of hostilities on a commerce-destroying mission in the Pacific, but they appear at first to have found the British patrol too thorough, and their captures were few and far between. One minor success was scored by the "Nürnberg."

## 134 Heligoland to Keeling Island

berg " which, by adopting the ruse of flying the French flag, was able to approach Fanning Island unmolested, and there to land a force which cut the Pacific cable. Except for this solitary exploit, the German cruisers in the Pacific for a considerable time gave practically no sign of their existence.

The appearance on the scene of Japan, and her resolve to turn the Germans out of their fortified base at Kiao-Chau, greatly simplified the task of the British forces in that quarter and made it possible to take effective steps for the protection of British shipping in the Pacific. The reduction of Tsingtau, the dockyard and naval base of Kiao-Chau, was the task before the Japanese and their British Allies, and one which they were well able to accomplish by virtue of the powerful naval and military forces at their command. It fell to a British warship to draw the first fire from the German forts at Tsingtau, for the destroyer " Kennet," whilst chasing the German destroyer S 90, approached too close to a battery and sustained some casualties, three seamen being killed and seven wounded. Regrettable as was this loss of life, the incident showed the zeal of our officers and men to come to grips with the enemy. The seaward forts at Tsingtau were understood to be fairly strong, though they were not fully completed when war broke out.

Japan meanwhile had announced her intention of proceeding slowly with the reduction of this German stronghold, knowing well that success was certain in the end, and desirous of avoiding

## End of Germany's Colonies 135

the heavy losses which must have followed any attempt to capture the place by storm.

On the expiration of the Japanese ultimatum the German Emperor had ordered the garrison at Tsingtau, to defend the position to the utmost, and the Governor thereupon issued a defiant proclamation. At the outset our Allies contented themselves with a close blockade of the German port and the removal of mines which had been generously sown in the neighbourhood. They also seized certain islands in the Bay of Kiao-Chau which might serve as advanced bases for the inshore blockading ships.

A most interesting announcement, however, was made in a message from Tokio, to the effect that two Japanese seaplanes, engaged in reconnoitring the German position, had succeeded in dropping bombs on German warships in Tsingtau harbour. The report added that fire and smoke were seen to arise from one of these ships, the inference being that the aerial bomb had found its mark and wrought considerable damage. This was the first authentic instance of successful attack from the air against warships, and the fact that it was achieved by the Japanese is fresh testimony to the progressive and enterprising spirit of that seafaring race.

Unfortunately our gallant Allies had to deplore the loss of a warship and many valuable lives through the agency of the deadly mine. On October 20th it was officially announced that the cruiser "Takachiho" had struck one of these infernal engines in Kiao-Chau Bay and gone to the bottom, taking with her 271 members of

## 136 Heligoland to Keeling Island

the crew. The "Takachiho" was a very old vessel, having been launched as far back as 1885. She displaced 3,700 tons, had a speed of 18 knots, and carried a battery of eight 6-inch guns. She performed good service during the Chino-Japanese war, and was also present during the operations against Russia, but she had long since ceased to have any fighting value. Nevertheless, the heavy casualty list was a regrettable feature of the occurrence. The cruiser foundered almost immediately, and though destroyers hurried to the scene, rescue work was difficult in the darkness, and only a few survivors were picked up.

When the mine-sweeping operations had been completed and other preliminary measures taken, the Anglo-Japanese forces began a systematic bombardment of the seaward forts of Tsingtau, inflicting severe damage. Beneath this hail of projectiles the German batteries soon ceased their fire, which had caused practically no injury to the Allies' ships. The enemy's trenches and redoubts had also suffered heavily from the fire of the Japanese siege guns. Finally, on November 7th, the defences were stormed by the Anglo-Japanese troops, all the main forts being taken in rapid succession at the point of the bayonet. The main attack had been delivered before dawn, and before eight o'clock the white flag was flying from all the forts. Negotiations for the surrender of the town were quickly arranged, and on the following Tuesday the Allied forces entered and took possession of Tsingtau.

The number of German prisoners taken at the

## End of Germany's Colonies 137

capture was 2,300. In spite of the Kaiser's frenzied appeal to the garrison of Tsingtau to resist "to the last man," and of the Governor's defiant proclamation to the same effect, the fortress had succumbed after a siege of only six weeks. The Japanese casualties during the entire operations were 1,500 killed and wounded, the British losses being twelve killed, sixty-one wounded.

It need hardly be said that the news of the fall was received with bitterness and anger in Germany. Great hopes had been set upon the future of Kiao-Chau, which had always been regarded as the base for an unlimited extension of Germany's commercial and political influence in China. That dream was over, and it was not surprising to find the German newspapers uttering dire but impotent threats of vengeance against Japan and England.

The successful termination of this joint enterprise was marked by an exchange of congratulatory telegrams between the British Admiralty and the Japanese Ministry of Marine.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE DEBUT OF THE SUBMARINE

A FEW months before the war, Admiral Sir Percy Scott, who had achieved world-wide fame as one of the pioneers of scientific gunnery, created a sensation in naval circles by publishing a letter in which he declared bluntly that the development of the submarine had reached a stage at which it had practically rendered obsolete and useless the surface fighting ships. In his opinion, large war vessels which moved on the surface had become superfluous. Each and all, he contended, would fall an easy prey to the submarine. There was no function of modern naval warfare which the submarine could not fulfil as well as or better than the costliest surface type. Sir Percy went so far as to question the wisdom of devoting another penny to the construction of battleships, cruisers, and their attendant craft. We should do better, he urged, to build submarines, and nothing but submarines.

The controversy thus started was both interesting and instructive. Several distinguished authorities recorded their views, which for the most part were antagonistic to Admiral Scott's theory, and the discussion had not terminated when the war broke out. It may be said, however, that the

## The Debut of the Submarine 139

bulk of authoritative naval opinion did not approve of the suggestion that we should cease to build "capital" ships.

Curiously enough, one of the earliest incidents of the war at sea seemed to have a vital bearing on the late discussion. On August 9th, a flotilla of German submarines was discovered by our vessels of the First Light Cruiser Squadron, and one of the enemy's boats, identified later as U15, was immediately sunk by H.M.S. "Birmingham." Shortly after this gratifying piece of intelligence had arrived, Mr. Churchill, the First Lord of the Admiralty, addressed to the Lord Mayor of Birmingham the following message :

"Birmingham will learn with pride that the first German submarine destroyed in the war was sunk by H.M.S. 'Birmingham.'"

Although no official account of this affair was published, it appeared that the ill-fated German submarine had fallen a victim to the brilliant gunnery of the cruiser named, which completed the enemy's destruction by ramming her—the first incident of the kind in naval warfare.

The "Birmingham," to which fell the honour of thus accounting for the first German submarine, is one of our very latest light cruisers, having only been commissioned for service in February last. She was built by Messrs. Armstrong, Whitworth & Co. at their Elswick yard. The displacement is 5,440 tons, length 430 feet, beam 50 feet, and Parsons turbines of 22,000 h.p. are fitted to give an estimated speed of 25 knots.



## 140 Heligoland to Keelung Island

In common with most British light cruisers of recent construction, the "Birmingham" is powerfully armed. She carries nine 6-inch quick-firing guns of the latest type, each of these weapons being able to discharge eight or more 100-lb. projectiles per minute. The guns are so disposed that five of them can be brought into action on either broadside, four can fire ahead, and three astern. There are, in addition, four 3-pounder guns and two submerged torpedo tubes. The fighting value of the "Birmingham" is enhanced by a thin armour belt, which, together with a strong steel curved deck, gives protection to the vital parts of the ship against shell-fire. . .

Even after allowing for any slight exaggeration which may have crept into unofficial accounts of the sinking of the German submarine, it is obvious that the "Birmingham" and her sister cruisers must have been exercising extreme vigilance, and also that, immediately the danger was seen and recognised, it was met with that perfect coolness and sang-froid which characterises British seamen.

This incident was rightly regarded as being of considerable significance. In the first place it had proved as nothing else could have done the watchfulness and readiness of the British sentinels in the Narrow Seas. Secondly, it had demonstrated that the submarine, whatever its powers, was by no means invulnerable, and was, indeed, at a great disadvantage when in the presence of an alert and resourceful enemy. But the first conclusions drawn from the sinking of "U 15" were altogether too sweeping. The affair was



## 142 Heligoland to Keeling Island

been lost. The casualty list subsequently issued was as follows : Dead 259, and wounded 16.

From the first there appeared to be some doubt as to whether the loss of the " Pathfinder " was really due to a mine. A day or two after the official report was issued it became known that this light cruiser had, in fact, fallen a victim to the well-placed torpedo of a German submarine. How the original mistake arose and how it was able to be corrected, are questions not yet answered, and there is still a doubt in some quarters as to the accuracy of the later version. At all events the enemy had been able to deal a heavy blow at us and to compensate himself somewhat for the grievous losses which the German Navy had sustained in the action off Heligoland.

Moving stories as to the appalling suddenness of the disaster and of the heroism of the crew were current. Two of these narratives which appeared in *The Scotsman* may well be quoted here :

" When the whole story of the disaster to the ' Pathfinder ' is recorded it will ring with the heroism which has ever lived in the annals of British seamanship, and it will show that our sailors to-day are men who can live up to the most glorious of our naval traditions. So much I was able to gather from the simple but thrilling tale of bravery told to me by one of the survivors of the disaster.

" The sailors were busy about ordinary duties when the crash came. It was terribly sudden, and the vessel shuddered from end to end. Those in the fore part of the vessel, where she was struck, had no chance. The others were knocked down by the

## The Debut of the Submarine 143

force of the explosion. Then came a moment of horror.

" 'Feeling stunned,' said the narrator, 'I struggled to my knees. Above us and all round us was the blackness of night, and wreckage of all kinds came down upon us out of the smoke and darkness. I got up and ran aft, where the men were busy working to the orders of the officers. The boat was going down, or what was left of it was gradually settling down into the water. The situation was desperate, and, obeying instructions, we made the most of the short time that was going to be left to us to throw overboard anything that might help in the saving of life.

" 'Our boats had been smashed up, so we pitched overboard booms, lumps of wood, the wooden gratings, and anything we could lay our hands on that would float. We even tried to wrench doors off their hinges, but these were too much for us.

" 'Meantime the smoke-cloud was clearing, and we could see that only the stern was above water and the sea, which was heavy, was strewn with wreckage. There was no panic among us. Officers and men were splendid. The stern of the vessel began to tilt up, and eventually when all that could be done had been done we awaited our orders.

" 'The order was given, and it was the dramatic and inevitable one of "Every man for himself." Officers and men took to the water, and clung to anything which was an aid to floating on the chance that help would come. Some of the men were already injured; many were in a dazed condition with the shock of the explosion.'

" Associated with the disaster for all time is the record of the bravery of some of the seamen in this desperate plight, and in this connection a lieutenant and a chief petty officer were specially extolled to

## 144 Heligoland to Keeling Island

me. Both strong swimmers, their heroism prevented the death list from being heavier than it stands. The latter swam here and there among his struggling comrades, carrying them lumps of wood and wreckage, and assisting this one and then another. He eventually had formed a group of eleven in all. His efforts were untiring. Any stray flotsam from the wreck which he could find he brought back to his desperate little colony, and, packing it under the arms of the more exhausted men, he made their position as secure as possible under the circumstances.

"Then there followed a trying and anxious period of waiting. Ideas of the passage of time in these conditions are apt to go awry, and the estimate of survivors that they were in the water for over an hour probably suffers from pardonable exaggeration. However, for a considerable time they were hanging half-exhausted between life and death. During that dreadful suspense, the chief petty officer spoke repeated words of encouragement to his comrades. He even went the length, I am told, at one stage of trying to get them to join him in the popular chorus of 'Tipperary,' but the response was not heartening.

"Already injured himself, his strength was well-nigh spent, but his spirit was indomitable. He continued to cheer the others with words of hope, but one after another his group began to slip away. I am told that no fewer than four sank out of sight in turn. The explanation in one or two cases seems to be that the men got somewhat excited; their life-buoys, in the shape of wreckage, kept them just at breathing height above the surface, and in an attempt to improve their position they sacrificed their only chance.

"Meantime torpedo-boats were racing against time to their rescue, and when the heroic petty officer saw the smoke in the distance he cheered until he

## The Debut of the Submarine 145

fired anew the drooping hopes of his comrades. He was so exhausted himself, it is said, when the boats reached the spot that it was with difficulty he was picked up and taken on board. Subsequently, he attended the funeral of two of his dead shipmates at Queensferry, wearing on one foot a black boot, and on the other a white rubber shoe over his bandages, while his injured right hand was also swathed in bandage cloth."

Although the Germans had far fewer submarines completed than we had when war was declared, they had been able to score the first success in this new and deadly form of sea warfare. But their triumph was short-lived, for the British Navy lost remarkably little time in "equalising." On September 15th telegrams arrived from Copenhagen, Amsterdam, and Rome, all announcing that on the 13th the small German cruiser "Hela" had been sunk by a torpedo from a hostile submarine. The Rome despatch specifically mentioned a British submarine. It was not, however, till two days later that the Admiralty issued the following statement:

"Submarine E 9 (Lieutenant-Commander Max K. Horton) has returned safely after having torpedoed a German cruiser, believed to be the 'Hela,' six miles south of Heligoland."

The curt official message was amplified to a welcome extent by the narrative of a correspondent at Harwich, who derived his information from a reliable source. The story furnished fresh proof of the zeal, daring, and resourcefulness of the work of our Fleet in the North Sea:

## 146 Heligoland to Keeling Island

"There arrived in port this afternoon (September 16th) Submarine E 9. She was flying a flag which I happen to know indicated that she had been in action. Sailors on the depôt ship seem to have been aware of the success which had been achieved, for they mustered in full force and gave the crew, lined up on the little 'deck' of the submarine, a rousing welcome home.

"This is how the 'Hela' was destroyed. In the early hours of Sunday morning two or three British submarines were stalking the cruiser about six miles off the German coast. The wind was freshening, and the sea was beginning to get up. Later it blew hard, but that was after the 'Hela' had gone to the bottom.

"One of the submarines came to the surface at about half-past six, and sighted the enemy. The cruiser was seen to be within range. With all possible speed the submarine dived, and launched two torpedoes at her. There was an interval of only fifteen seconds between the dispatch of the two deadly missiles. Whether only one or both struck the doomed ship the submarine's crew did not know. According to my informant, about thirty-five seconds after the second torpedo was dispatched they heard a sound which told them that it at least had found its billet in the 'Hela's' side. The submarine remained below the surface for about a quarter of an hour, and then came up. It was at once seen that the 'Hela' was badly damaged. She had a heavy list to starboard, and looked all over like a badly-stricken ship.

"There were other German vessels, not active fighting units, in the vicinity, and again the submarine dived. It was perhaps the prudent course to take. After an interval spent under water the submarine once more rose to the surface. The 'Hela' had disappeared.

## The Debut of the Submarine 147

"Berlin says that nearly all the crew were saved. No doubt they were picked up by the various German craft in the neighbourhood. My informant, an expert, thinks that those who were lost must have been killed by the shock when the ship was struck."

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The "Hela," which displaced 2,000 tons, was the oldest light cruiser in the German Navy. She was launched in 1895, could steam at 19½ knots, and was armed with ten small quick-firing guns. Her complement numbered 191 officers and men. Being of small fighting value her loss was not in itself a serious blow to the enemy, but coming on the heels of the "Pathfinder" disaster it was welcomed by the British public as a proof that the submarines on our side were no less active than those of our opponents. Moreover, the scene of this exploit added to its significance. Submarine "E 9" had caught and dispatched her victim only six miles from Heligoland, the island stronghold on which the Germans rely to a great extent for the protection of their North Sea coast. That a British submarine should have been so near this German base speaks volumes for the value of our under-water craft as scouts.

The sinking of the "Hela" was sure evidence that our submarines continued to keep the enemy's waters under close observation, and the knowledge that these formidable boats were always within striking distance cannot have been without effect on the spirit of the German crews.

We come now to the first really serious misfortune which befell the British Navy during the two months it had been at war. The news was



## 148 Heligoland to Keeling Island

conveyed in the following statement from the Admiralty, issued on September 22nd :

“ His Majesty’s ships :

‘ Aboukir ’ (Captain John E. Drummond),

‘ Hogue ’ (Captain Wilmot S. Nicholson),  
and

‘ Cressy ’ (Captain Robert W. Johnson)  
have been sunk by submarines in the North Sea.

“ The ‘ Aboukir ’ was torpedoed, and whilst the ‘ Hogue ’ and the ‘ Cressy ’ had closed and were standing by to save the crew, they were also torpedoed.

“ A considerable number were saved by His Majesty’s ship ‘ Lowestoft ’ (Captain Theobald W. B. Kennedy), and by a division of destroyers, trawlers, and boats.

“ Lists of casualties will be published as soon as they are known.”

This message was followed by cables from Amsterdam and Ymuiden announcing the arrival of survivors from the sunken cruisers. These officers and men had been saved by several Dutch and British steamers, mostly fishing vessels, which rushed to the scene as soon as news of the disaster reached them. One or two of the vessels actually witnessed the sinking of the British cruisers. The men they rescued were most kindly treated, being provided with such clothing and warm food as was available. On reaching Holland the survivors received every attention and were most hospitably entertained by the authorities and the people. It was feared at first that the dictates of international law would require the detention of these officers and

## The Debut of the Submarine 149

men in Holland till the end of the war, but happily the Dutch jurists decided otherwise, and the survivors from the three cruisers were all sent back to England in due course.

It was inevitable that a disaster of this kind, involving the loss of three large ships and of many hundred lives, should have been the subject of contradictory stories. Many of the men knew very little before they found themselves struggling in the water, and even those in command were doubtful at first whether the squadron had run into a minefield or was being attacked by enemy submarines. In these circumstances, therefore, the facts of the affair were not fully known until the Admiralty had published the reports sent in by the senior officers who had survived and landed in England. We cannot do better than reproduce these in full, together with the introductory comments made by the Admiralty :

"The sinking of the 'Aboukir' was, of course, an ordinary hazard of patrolling duty. The 'Hogue' and 'Cressy,' however, were sunk because they proceeded to the assistance of their consort, and remained with engines stopped, endeavouring to save life, thus presenting an easy and certain target to further submarine attacks. The natural promptings of humanity have in this case led to heavy losses, which would have been avoided by a strict adherence to military considerations.

"Modern naval war is presenting us with so many new and strange situations that an error of judgment of this character is pardonable. But it has been necessary to point out for the future guidance of his Majesty's ships that the conditions which prevail when one vessel of a squadron is injured in a mine-field,

## 150 Heligoland to Keeling Island

or is exposed to submarine attack are analogous to those which occur in an action, and that the rule of leaving disabled ships to their own resources is applicable, so far at any rate as large vessels are concerned.

"No act of humanity, whether to friend or foe, should lead to a neglect of the proper precautions and dispositions of war, and no measures can be taken to save life which prejudice the military situation. Small craft of all kinds should, however, be directed by wireless to close the damaged ship with all speed.

"The loss of nearly sixty officers and 1,400 men would not have been grudged if it had been brought about by gunfire in an open action; but it is peculiarly distressing under the conditions which prevailed. The absence of any of the ardour and excitement of an engagement did not, however, prevent the display of discipline, cheerful courage, and ready self-sacrifice among all ranks and ratings exposed to the ordeal.

"The duty on which these vessels were engaged was an essential part of the arrangements by which the control of the seas and the safety of the country are maintained, and the lives lost are as usefully, as necessarily, and as gloriously devoted to the requirements of his Majesty's service as if the loss had been incurred in a general action. In view of the certainty of a proportion of misfortunes of this character occurring from time to time, it is important that this point of view should be thoroughly appreciated.

"The loss of these three cruisers, apart from the loss of life, is of small naval significance. Although they were large and powerful ships, they belonged to a class of cruisers whose speeds have been surpassed by many of the enemy's battleships.

"Before the war it had been decided that no more money should be spent in repairing any of this class,

## The Debut of the Submarine 151

and that they should make their way to the sale list as soon as serious defects became manifest.

"REPORT BY COMMANDER BERTRAM W. L. NICHOLSON, R.N., LATE OF H.M.S. 'CRESSY.'

" *September 23rd, 1914.*

"SIR,—I have the honour to submit the following report in connection with the sinking of H.M.S. 'Cressy,' in company with H.M.S. 'Aboukir' and Hogue,' on the morning of September 22nd.

"Whilst on patrol duty, 'Aboukir' was struck at about 6.25 a.m. on starboard beam.

"'Hogue' and 'Cressy' closed and took up position, 'Hogue' ahead of 'Aboukir' and 'Cressy' about 400 yards on port beam.

"As soon as it was seen that 'Aboukir' was in danger of sinking, all boats were sent away from 'Cressy,' and picket boat was hoisted out without steam up; when cutters full of 'Aboukir's' men were returning to 'Cressy,' 'Hogue' was struck, apparently under aft 9.2 magazine, as a very heavy explosion took place immediately after the first explosion. Almost directly after 'Hogue' was hit, we observed a periscope on our port bow, about 300 yards off.

"Fire was immediately opened and engines put full speed ahead with intention of running her down. Our gunner, Mr. Dogherty, positively asserts that he hit the periscope and that the submarine then showed her conning tower, which he struck, and the submarine sank. An officer standing alongside the gunner thinks that the shell struck only floating timber, of which there was much about, but it was evidently the impression of the men on deck, who cheered and

## 162 Heligoland to Keeling Island

clapped heartily, that the submarine had been hit. This submarine did not fire a torpedo at 'Cressy.'

"Captain Johnson then manœuvred the ship so as to render assistance to crews of 'Hogue' and 'Aboukir.' About five minutes later another periscope was seen on our starboard quarter. Fire was opened, the track of the torpedo she fired at range of 500 to 600 yards was plainly visible, and it struck us, starboard side, just before the after bridge; the ship listed about 10 degrees to starboard and remained steady—time, 7.15 a.m.

"All watertight doors, dead lights, and scuttles had been securely closed before the torpedo struck ship. All mess stools and tables, shores, and all available timber below and on deck had been previously got up and thrown over the side for saving of life. A second torpedo, fired by the same submarine, missed and passed about 20 feet astern.

"About a quarter of an hour after the first torpedo had hit, a third torpedo fired from a submarine just before starboard beam hit us in No. 5 boiler-room—time, 7.30 a.m. The ship then began to heel rapidly and finally turned keel up, remaining so for about twenty minutes before she finally sank at 7.55 a.m. A large number of men were saved by the casting adrift of a Pattern 3 target. The steam pinnace floated out of her crutches, but filled and sank.

"The second torpedo which struck 'Cressy' passed over sinking hull of 'Aboukir,' narrowly missing it. It is possible that the same submarine fired all three torpedoes at 'Cressy.'

"The conduct of the crew was excellent throughout. I have already reported the

## The Debut of the Submarine 153

splendid service rendered by Captain Phillips, master of the trawler 'L. T. Coriander,' and his crew, who picked up 156 officers and men. I have the honour, etc.,

"BERTRAM W. L. NICHOLSON,

• "Commander, late H.M.S. 'Cressy.'"

"REPORT BY COMMANDER REGINALD A. NORTON, R.N.,  
• LATE OF H.M.S. 'HOGUE.'"

• "September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1914.

"Sir, I have the honour to report as follows concerning the sinking of H.M.S.'s 'Hogue,' 'Aboukir,' and 'Cressy':

• "Between 6.15 and 6.30 a.m. H.M.S. 'Aboukir' was struck by a torpedo. The 'Hogue' closed the 'Aboukir,' and I received  
• orders to hoist out the launch, turn out and prepare all boats and unlash all timber on the upper deck. The two lifeboats were sent to the 'Aboukir,' but before the launch could get away the 'Hogue' was struck on the starboard side amidships by two torpedoes at intervals of ten to twenty seconds.

• "The ship at once began to heel to starboard. After ordering the men to provide themselves with wood, hammocks, etc., and to get into the boats on the booms and take off their clothes, I went, by Captain Nicholson's directions, to ascertain the damage in the engine-rooms. An artificer-engineer informed me that the water was over the engine-room gratings. While endeavouring to return to the bridge the water burst open the starboard entry-port doors, and the ship heeled rapidly.

"I told the men in the port battery to jump overboard, as the launch was close alongside."

## 164 Heligoland to Keeling Island

and soon afterwards the ship lurched heavily to starboard. I clung to a ringbolt for some time, but eventually dropped on to the deck, and a huge wave washed me away. I climbed up the ship's side, and was again washed off. Eventually, after swimming about from various overlaid pieces of wreckage, I was picked up by a cutter from the 'Hogue,' Coxswain L. S. Marks, which pulled about for some hours picking up men and discharging them into our picket boat and steam pinnace, and to the Dutch steamers 'Flora' and 'Titan,' and rescued in this way Commander Sells, Engineer-Commander Stokes, with legs broken, Fleet Paymaster Eldred, and about 120 others.

"Finally, about 11 a.m., when we could find no more men in the water, we were picked up by his Majesty's ship 'Lucifer,' which proceeded to the 'Titan,' and took off from her all our men except about twenty, who were too ill to be moved.

"A Lowestoft trawler and the two Dutch ships 'Flora' and 'Titan' were extraordinarily kind, clothing and feeding our men. My boat's crew, consisting mainly of Royal Naval Reserve men, pulled and behaved remarkably well. I particularly wish to mention Petty Officer (First Class) Halton, who, by encouraging the men in the water near me, undoubtedly saved many lives.

"Lieutenant-Commander Phillipps-Wolley, after hoisting out the launch, asked me if he should try to hoist out another boat, and endeavoured to do so. The last I saw of him was on the after-bridge doing well. Lieutenant Tillard was picked up by the launch, got up a cutter's crew, and saved many lives, as did Midshipman

## The Debut of the Submarine 155

Cazalet in the 'Cressy's' gig. Lieutenant Chichester turned out the whaler very quickly.

"A Dutch sailing trawler sailed close by, but went off without rendering any assistance, though we signalled to her from the 'Hogue' to close after we were struck.

"The 'Aboukir' appeared to me to take about thirty-five minutes to sink, floating bottom up for about five minutes. The 'Hogue' turned turtle very quickly in about five minutes, and floated bottom up for some minutes. A dense black smoke was seen in the starboard battery, whether from coal or torpedo cordite I could not say. The upper deck was not blown up, and only one other small explosion occurred as we heeled over.

"The 'Cressy' I watched heel over from the cutter; she heeled over to starboard very slowly, a dense black smoke issuing from her when she attained an angle of about 90°, and she took a long time from this angle till she floated bottom up with the starboard screw slightly out of the water. I consider it was thirty-five to forty-five minutes from the time she was struck till she was bottom up.

"All the men in the 'Hogue' behaved extraordinarily well, obeying orders even when in the water swimming for their lives, and I witnessed many cases of great self-sacrifice and gallantry.

"Farmstone, able seaman, R.F.R., his Majesty's ship 'Hogue', jumped overboard from the launch to make room for others, and would not avail himself of assistance until all men near by were picked up—he was in the water about half-an-hour.

"There was no panic of any sort, the men



## 166 Heligoland to Keeling Island

taking off their clothes as ordered and falling in with hammock or wood.

"Captain Nicholson, in our other cutter, as usual, was perfectly cool, and rescued a large number of men. I last saw him alongside the 'Flora.'"

"Engineer-Commander Stokes, I believe, was in the engine room to the last, and Engineer Lieutenant-Commander Fendick got steam on the boat hoist and worked it in five minutes.

"I have the honour to submit that I may be appointed to another ship as soon as I can get a kit.—I have the honour, &c.,

"REGINALD A. NORTON,

"Commander, late H.M.S. 'Hague.'"

To these singularly lucid narratives there is little to add. Perhaps the outstanding feature of the sad affair was the terribly destructive effect of the enemy's torpedoes. Only one torpedo, it appears, struck the "Aboukir," yet this single explosion sufficed to send to the bottom a vessel of 12,000 tons, and that within a very short space of time. Each of the other two cruisers seems to have received a couple of torpedoes, the effect of which, in one case, was to explode an ammunition magazine, thus vastly increasing the damage. It should be pointed out that the "Cressy" class, to which all three vessels belonged, were designed in 1898, and at that date the torpedo was still in its infancy as a practical adjunct of naval warfare. Hence the designers of the period did not concern themselves very much with internal protection against under-water explosion, but devoted their attention to mitigating the effect

## The Debut of the Submarine 157

of gun-fire. The modern large warship is minutely sub-divided, or, in other words, has a very large number of watertight compartments, together with "explosion bulkheads" which are intended to break the force and localise the effect of a mine or torpedo explosion. It is, therefore, possible that a really modern warship would not fall so easy a prey to the deadly torpedo as vessels which were built at a period when under-water attack had not been brought to anything like its present degree of perfection.

Various rumours have been current regarding a mysterious new explosive which the Germans are said to possess. It is quite possible that some secret compound of extraordinary violence does exist in Germany, but from all accounts the enemy's mines and torpedoes are charged with an explosive known as "Trinitrotoleune," or "T.N.T.," as it is called in this country, which is not greatly superior to the British lyddite and guncotton. At all events, the swift destruction of these three cruisers and of H.M.S. "Pathfinder" bore eloquent testimony to the appalling effect of the modern torpedo, which carries a bursting charge of about 250 lbs. of T.N.T., guncotton, or some other high-explosive.

Nearly all the survivors, who gave their impressions of the disaster, spoke of several submarines having made the attack. The German official account, on the other hand, insisted that all three cruisers had been sunk by a single submarine, "U 9," which returned safely to Germany after its feat. It was impossible after this affair to deny that German submarines were handled

## 158 Heligoland to Keeling Island

with remarkable skill and boldness, a fact of which, unfortunately, we were shortly to have additional proof.

The three lost cruisers, which had taken part in the action in the Heligoland Bight, were, as we have said, of uniform type, representing the oldest armoured cruisers in the British Navy. The displacement was 12,000 tons, the designed speed 21 knots, and the armament consisted of two 9.2-inch, twelve 6-inch, and many smaller guns, with two submerged torpedo tubes. On the waterline there was a belt of 6-inch armour, and the gun positions had plating of equal thickness. Three other vessels of the same type still remain to the Navy, namely, the "Sutlej," "Bacchante," and "Euryalus."

In spite of the nerve-racking ordeal through which they had passed, the survivors of the lost cruisers were wonderfully cheerful on their return to this country. The men were keenly alive to the tragic nature of the affair and bitterly grieved at the loss of their comrades, but they refused to be depressed, and their one thought was to find an opportunity of, as they put it, "getting a bit of their own back."

Many of them maintained that two of the attacking submarines had been sunk, and it will be seen from the official reports that the gunner of the "Cressy" was certain he had sent one of the boats to the bottom. This the Germans deny, declaring, as we have noted, that only one submarine was present and that she came off absolutely unscathed. If we credit this we must assume that the men in the "Cressy" were mis-

## The Debut of the Submarine 159

taken, but it is at the same time possible that the Germans, true to their policy of concealing losses wherever this is feasible, did, in fact, lose one or more boats as the result of gun-fire from the "Cressy."

Less than a month after the disaster to the three cruisers the nation had to deplore yet another victim to the deadly submarines. An Admiralty announcement on October 16th reported that the cruiser "Theseus" had been attacked by a submarine in the northern waters of the North Sea, but had escaped damage, the torpedoes fired by the submarine having gone wide. At about the same time, however, the cruiser "Hawke" was attacked, and in this case the enemy's torpedo got home with disastrous effect, for the cruiser sank very quickly, taking with her a large portion of the complement; 525 lives were, indeed, lost, including 26 officers, of whom eight were midshipmen. The torpedo, it appears, struck amidships, and its detonation is believed to have exploded a magazine, for there was a second terrific report, after which the "Hawke" began rapidly to settle down. A large number of men were killed by the explosion, but the remainder kept their heads admirably. Survivors said the officers were "splendid." There was no trace whatever of panic, but it was quickly realised that nothing could save the ship, and then followed the order "every man for himself." So swiftly did the stricken ship sink beneath the waves, however, that few of the crew were able to find places in the boats.

## 160 Heligoland to Keeling Island

The "Hawke" was a very old protected cruiser of 7,350 tons, of 20 knots speed, and armed with two 9·2-inch, ten 6-inch, and many smaller guns. Having been launched as far back as 1891 she was totally obsolete, and her loss was of small account in this respect. It was the heavy death-roll that mattered.

Meanwhile our own submarine officers were burning to avenge these repeated blows. But they were handicapped by the tactics of the enemy, who simply refused to let one of his big ships show its nose out of harbour. Hence, eager as our officers were to launch their torpedoes, they had practically nothing to attack, and could only wait in patience until such time as the Germans thought fit to venture outside. Baulked of their larger prey, the British submarines had to fall back on smaller fry. Nor was their search altogether vain, for, on October 7th, the Admiralty announced that Submarine E 9 (Lieut.<sup>c</sup> Commander Max K. Horton) had returned safely after having torpedoed and sunk a German torpedo-boat-destroyer off the Ems River. It was this same officer, commanding the same submarine, who had previously accounted for the cruiser "Hela."

The first three months of the war did not close before the submarine had taken further toll of our Navy. On October 31st it became known that H.M.S. "Hermes," one of the vessels which had been engaged in the operations against the Germans on the Belgian coast, had been attacked and torpedoed by an enemy submarine. Although badly hit the cruiser kept afloat some

## The Debut of the Submarine 161

considerable time, and it was owing to circumstance that the casualties were comparatively few. The "Hermes" was a protected cruiser of 5,600 tons, with a speed of 20 knots and an armament of eleven 6-inch guns. She was launched in 1898, and was therefore of obsolete type. For some time she had been doing duty as a depot ship for seaplanes. The exact circumstances under which she was attacked and sunk have not been made public.

During the second week of October a similar misfortune befell our Russian allies. The armoured cruiser "Pallada," of 7,900 tons and 21 knots speed, launched in 1906, was torpedoed by a German submarine in the Baltic, and went to the bottom with most of her crew. On the same day the "Pallada," with another vessel of the same class, had been attacked by submarines but managed to drive off her assailants. A second attempt by the enemy proved successful. This mishap deprived the Russian Fleet of a useful ship and many valuable lives. The armament of the "Pallada" consisted of two 8-inch, eight 6-inch, and several smaller guns, and she was well armoured.

Some idea of the useful, but exceedingly dangerous work in which our own submarines were engaged in the North Sea has been revealed. The following passage from the highly interesting despatch of Commodore Keyes presented to the mind lay a vivid idea of the courage, endurance and resource of the gallant crews of our underwater craft:

"Against an enemy whose capital vessels have

## 162 Heligoland to Keeling Island

never, and light cruisers have seldom, emerged from their fortified harbours, opportunities of delivering submarine attacks have necessarily been few, and on one occasion only, prior to September 13th, has one of our submarines been within torpedo range of a cruiser during daylight hours.

"During the exceptionally heavy westerly gales which prevailed between September 14th and 21st, the position of the submarines on a lee shore, within a few miles of the enemy's coast, was an unpleasant one.

"The short, steep seas which accompany westerly gales in the Heligoland Bight made it difficult to keep the conning-tower hatches open. There was no rest to be obtained, and even when cruising at a depth of 60 feet the submarines were rolling considerably and pumping, i.e., vertically moving about 20 feet.

"I submit that it was creditable to the commanding officers that they should have maintained their stations under such conditions.

"Service in the Heligoland Bight is keenly sought after by the commanding officers of the Eighth Submarine Flotilla, and they have all shown daring and enterprise in the execution of their duties. These officers have unanimously expressed to me their admiration of the cool and gallant behaviour of the officers and men under their command. They are, however, of the opinion that it is impossible to single out individuals when all have performed their duties so admirably, and in this I concur."

Throughout the early period of the war British submarines did splendid work. Skilful handling and fine seamanship enabled the British vessels to avert many of the perils which confronted them daily, but one boat was not so fortunate. This

## The Debut of the Submarine 163

was the E 3. She had been overdue some days, but hopes were entertained that she would turn up in the end. Unfortunately the fact proved otherwise, and an Admiralty statement on October 22nd made it clear that E 3 had been destroyed by the enemy, but in what manner is unknown.

On October 25th the British destroyer "Badger" rammed a German submarine off the Dutch coast. The Badger's bow was somewhat damaged by the impact, and there was every reason to suppose the enemy's boat had been despatched, considering the force of the blow which had been administered. However, by some miraculous means she survived, and, according to the German version, returned safely to port. Whether this version is authentic or not can only be surmised.

The events narrated will show what a prominent part the submarine has played in the early stages of the great war. It has demonstrated beyond all doubt its efficiency within certain limits. The circumstances have been somewhat exceptional. The patrol duties which, pending the appearance on the scene of the enemy's battle fleet, the British Navy has had to perform, has necessitated the presence in the North Sea of a large number of our ships, many of them slow and of obsolete type. The slower the ship the more easily it can be hit by the submarine. This is the moral of this aspect of the naval operations.



## CHAPTER VIII

### THE HEROES OF THE 'PEGASUS'

H.M.S. "PEGASUS" was a light cruiser of 2,135 tons. She was built as long ago as 1897, and was gravitating towards the scrap-heap when the war came, in fact she had gone there ten years before and had been recalled to active service.

Ten years ago we had an enormous number of ships like the "Pegasus," including many which were even older and weaker, scattered about the Seven Seas. Very few of them were capable of offering much resistance if they had been attacked by the foreign warships maintained on the same stations. Most of them, indeed, were too weak to fight and too slow to run away. One of the first steps taken by Lord Fisher when he became First Sea Lord in 1904 was to call home the majority of these third-rate cruisers, which were forthwith struck off the list. A great outcry was raised against this measure in certain quarters. The new policy, they declared, was tantamount to an abandonment of the outer seas, where the White Ensign had waved supreme for more than a century. The trade routes of the Empire had been deprived of their patrols, and our oversea trade jeopardised,

## The Heroes of the "Pegasus" 165

merely in order to save the cost of maintaining these cruisers in commission.

But Lord Fisher paid no heed to these arguments. He knew perfectly well what he was about, and he persisted in his policy until by far the greater number of the old small ships had been brought home and sent to their well-earned rest. In general the ships so ruthlessly discarded were mere death-traps, the possession of which in war time would have been a source not of strength, but of weakness. As long as they remained in service they absorbed a large number of officers and men who might have been more profitably employed elsewhere. The result of the new policy was to set free these officers and men for duty in really modern and effective ships.

The withdrawal of these vessels—too weak to fight and too slow to run away—was made good by despatching modern cruisers to the principal foreign stations, but there were not enough of them to replace all the obsolete ships, and a few were, mistakenly, retained in distant waters, "to show the flag." One of these veterans was the "Pegasus." When she left the builders' yard some sixteen years ago she was able to steam at 21 knots, which was one knot more than her engines were designed for. This was considered a creditable performance at the time. But in small vessels of this type the engines and boilers rapidly deteriorate, and unless continual and expensive repairs are carried out their speed steadily declines. It is doubtful if the "Pegasus" could do more than 16 knots

## 166 Helligoland to Keeling Island

when she was last commissioned for duty on the Cape station. Probably her engines and boilers had long since ceased to be efficient when the war began. Her armament was very meagre, consisting only of eight 4-inch, eight 3-pounder, and two machine guns, with two torpedo-tubes. All these weapons were of an old pattern. The "Pegasus," in a word, was a typical specimen of the class of warship which we had formerly employed in such numbers on the foreign stations. She was better than most of them and considerably more modern, but as a fighting ship her value was negligible.

When hostilities opened the "Pegasus" (Commander John A. Inglis, R.N.) rendered useful service. From her base at Zanzibar she undertook a successful expedition against the German port of Dar-es-Salaam, where, as recorded in an earlier chapter, she sank the German gunboat "Möwe" and a floating dock. After this feat she returned to Zanzibar, having apparently developed defects in the engine-room which necessitated a thorough overhaul. It was here that misfortune overtook her. According to an Admiralty statement of September 20th, the "Pegasus" was "attacked by the 'Königsberg' while at anchor in Zanzibar Harbour cleaning her boilers and repairing machinery. She was thus taken at a disadvantage, and, being somewhat outranged by the newer 4-inch guns of the 'Königsberg,' was completely disabled, after suffering a loss unofficially reported as 34 killed and 61 wounded. This is a high proportion out of a crew of 234.

## The Heroes of the "Pegasus" 167

The damage done to the 'Königsberg' is not known. She was last seen steaming away to the southward."

By reading between the lines of this brief official message, it is not difficult to picture the scene. Lying at anchor, with fires drawn and no steam in the boilers, the "Pegasus" was caught absolutely unawares. She could not move in order to bring her guns to bear on the enemy, who was thus able to choose his own position and to pound away at what was practically a helpless target. In every respect she was outmatched, and to such a one-sided duel there could only be one ending. Nevertheless, had the "Pegasus" been under steam at the time we may be sure the German ship would have had a much more difficult task.

Later accounts of the affair state that the "Königsberg's" guns began to speak at a range of 9,000 yards, i.e., over five miles. This was far beyond the extreme range of the antiquated weapons which the "Pegasus" mounted. The German gunners speedily found the range, and then there began what was nothing more or less than a slaughter. Shell after shell struck the British cruiser, sweeping the decks with a hail of steel and fire, tearing down the superstructure, disabling the guns, and laying low the officers and men. Unable to move, the "Pegasus" could bring at most only half of her guns into action, but these were served with splendid gallantry as long as there were men to work them. Realising the helpless plight of her victim, the "Königsberg" reduced the range;

## 168 Heligoland to Keeling Island

until she was raining in high-explosive shells at a distance of 6,000 yards. Nearer than this she would not approach, with the result that all the projectiles from the "Pegasus" fell short.

When the decks of the British ship were littered with dead and dying men, most of them near their wrecked guns, and the ship was battered almost beyond recognition, the German fire ceased, and the survivors, believing the action to be over, at once began to succour those of their comrades who were not beyond human aid. To assist in this work all the men who had been able to seek shelter from the murderous fire came on deck. At this moment the "Königsberg" again opened fire, her aim being as accurate as ever. Within a few minutes the work of destruction was complete. Every gun on the "Pegasus" was silenced, and her deck was a reeking shambles.

But the terrible scene did but serve to inspire one of those acts of heroism with which the records of the British Navy have made the world familiar. When the enemy's fire was at its hottest the British flag was torn from its halliards, and fell to the deck. In an instant it was seized and held aloft by two marines, who deliberately stood in the most exposed position in order to make it clear to the enemy that the flag was still flying. An exploding shell killed one of these gallant fellows, but without a moment's hesitation another marine took the place of his fallen comrade, and thus the flag continued to flutter bravely amidst the storm of projectiles which spread death and destruction

## The Heroes of the "Pegasus" 169

all round. It was still flying when the German cruiser fired the last shot, and steamed swiftly away from the scene of carnage. By some strange oversight the names of the heroes responsible for this superb act of heroism have never been made public, though their immortal deed deserves to be recorded in letters of gold in the Navy's roll of honour.

The moral of a deplorable affair was obvious. To employ obsolete vessels of inadequate armament in waters where the possible enemy is known to possess modern and well-armed ships is simply to invite disasters of this very kind. Fortunately, as already explained, the far-seeing policy inaugurated by Lord Fisher, and adhered to, in the main, by his successors, has eliminated many of the third-rate cruisers formerly maintained by us in foreign stations, and replaced them to some extent by newer ships able to give a good account of themselves. The ill-fated "Pegasus" was one of the exceptions.

The ship and the brave men in her did not perish in vain, for the heroism they displayed in their dire situation was an inspiration to their comrades all over the world. In due time, we may be confident, the "Pegasus" will be amply avenged.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE NAVAL BRIGADE AT ANTWERP

ONE of the most potent arguments adduced by German writers who, in recent years, have been preaching the doctrine of war against England, was that the British Navy, although very imposing as regarded material, was not, in fact, by any means as powerful as it appeared, owing to the great shortage of officers and men. Very few of our warships, it was said, had full crews on board, the large majority being sent to sea with only a skeleton complement, the result being that officers and men were overworked, and had no time to attend to training for war. This story was on a par with the other legends which were circulated to disparage and belittle the power of Britain in the eyes of the German public, and encourage them in the belief that they could, with a little effort, seize the Trident.

The speed with which the whole effective British Navy was mobilised on the eve of the outbreak of war must have come as a most unpleasant surprise to Germans who had been misled by statements as to the shortage of British naval personnel. But a bigger surprise was still to come. On September 6th, the Press Bureau issued a statement signed by Mr. Winston

## The Naval Brigade at Antwerp 171

Churchill, which announced that, after providing for all present and foreseeable future needs of the Fleets at sea, there remained available a large number of men belonging to the Royal Marines, Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve, Royal Fleet Reserve, and Royal Naval Reserve. The statement went on to say that a portion of these had been organised into one marine and two naval brigades, the whole comprising the infantry of one division, to be called the Royal Naval Division.

The marine brigade, it proceeded, for the organisation of which all preparations had been made before the war, had been for some time in being at a strength of 3,000, and had already been employed on active service at Ostend. The two naval brigades had been organised in the first instance at a strength of 3,750 each, and had been in camp since August 19th. The cadres of their eight battalions were formed from the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve, the Royal Fleet Reserve men and Royal Naval Reserve men. The three brigades were fully constituted by August 24th, and entered at once upon a period of field training to fit them for service abroad if required in the New Year. The battalions of the two naval brigades were each named after an admiral, as follows :

### FIRST ROYAL NAVAL BRIGADE.

" Drake " (1st), " Benbow " (2nd), " Hawke " (3rd),  
" Collingwood " (4th).

### SECOND ROYAL NAVAL BRIGADE.

" Nelson " (5th), " Howe " (6th), " Hood " (7th),  
" Anson " (8th).



## 172 Heligoland to Keeling Island

ROYAL MARINE BRIGADE.  
9th, 10th, 11th, 12th Battalions.

The Royal Naval Division was completely equipped in all respects by the Admiralty with field hospitals, transport, ammunition column, signal companies, cyclists, motor-cars, and machine guns.

The new Marine Brigade, recruiting for which was very brisk from the first from city offices, factories, and the universities, had been in existence less than a month when it was called upon to take an important part in the struggle on the Continent. During the closing days of September the Germans, true to their plan of subjugating all Belgium, advanced in force on the stronghold of Antwerp, the last and most formidable fortress in the Kingdom. The city was defended with the utmost heroism by the gallant Belgian Army, but the enemy brought up so many troops and guns that it speedily became evident that the garrison would need to be strongly reinforced if Antwerp were to be held.

The need was great, but it was difficult to say where reinforcements were to be procured. The Allied Army operating in France against the main German Army could not spare sufficient men without jeopardising their own strategical plans. Hence Belgium turned her eyes to England, and her appeal was not in vain. What followed may be told in the language of a statement issued at a later date by the Admiralty :

"In response to an appeal by the Belgian Government," said this document, "a Marine Brigade and

## The Naval Brigade at Antwerp 173

two Naval Brigades, together with some heavy naval guns, manned by a detachment of the Royal Navy, the whole under the command of Général Paris, R.M.A., were sent by his Majesty's Government to participate in the defence of Antwerp during the last week of the attack.

Up till the night of Monday, October 5th, the Belgian Army and the Marine Brigade successfully defended the line of the Nethe River. But early on Tuesday morning the Belgian forces on the right of the Marines were forced by a heavy German attack, covered by very powerful artillery, to retire, and in consequence the whole of the defence was withdrawn to the inner line of forts, the intervals between which had been strongly fortified. The ground which had been lost enabled the enemy to plant his batteries to bombard the city. The inner line of defences was maintained during Wednesday and Thursday while the city endured a ruthless bombardment.

"The behaviour of the Royal Marines and Naval Brigades in the trenches and in the field was praiseworthy in a high degree and remarkable in units so newly formed, and, owing to the protection of the entrenchments, the losses, in spite of the severity of the fire, are probably less than 300 out of a total force of 8,000. The defence could have been maintained for a longer period, but not long enough to allow of adequate forces being sent for their relief without prejudice to the main strategic situation.

"The enemy also began on Thursday to press strongly on the line of communications near Lokeren. The Belgian forces defending this point fought with great determination, but were gradually pressed back by numbers. In these circumstances the Belgian and British military authorities in Antwerp

## 174 Heligoland to Keeling Island

cover the retreat, but General de Guise desired that they should leave before the last division of the Belgian Army. After a long night march to St. Gilles the three Naval Brigades entrained.

"Two out of the three have arrived safely at Ostend, but owing to circumstances which are not yet fully known the greater part of the First Naval Brigade was cut off by the German attack north of Lokeren, and two thousand officers and men entered Dutch territory in the neighbourhood of Hulst and laid down their arms, in accordance with the laws of Neutrality.

"The naval armoured trains and heavy guns were all brought away."

It is important to remember that the great majority of the officers and men who took part in this expedition had had no previous military experience, and a few weeks before no inconsiderable proportion had been engaged in civil employment. Their training was necessarily incomplete, owing to the short time the Brigade had been formed. Nevertheless, it is clear from the official report, and still clearer from the many unofficial accounts, that the behaviour of the officers and men of the Brigade in circumstances of immense difficulty and danger was admirable. At short notice they were despatched to Belgium, and straightway rushed up to the firing line, where they at once came in for the attention of the German artillerists.

Day after day our men were bombarded with shrapnel and high-explosive shell. The Germans, it is now known, had placed in position a number of their dreaded giant howitzers, the terrific effect of whose projectiles has been one of the outstanding features of the war. The trenches

## The Naval Brigade at Antwerp 175

occupied by the Naval Brigade had been hastily made, and did not afford very much protection against this murderous fire. However, in a day or two our handy men had "dug themselves in" most effectively, constructing bomb-proof shelters which excited the admiration of veteran engineer officers.

Only rarely did the Germans reveal themselves as a target. The cannonade was incessant, but thanks to the excellent shelter which had been devised the casualties on our side were not heavy. It will be noticed from the official report that the defence could have been maintained for a longer period, but as there was no prospect of ultimate relief the Belgian and British Authorities decided to evacuate Antwerp. The greater part of the Allied force managed to retire intact, in spite of the fury with which the Germans pressed forward. It was unfortunate that about two thousand and five hundred members of the Naval Brigade were compelled to cross into Dutch territory, and there had to lay down their arms or had to be recorded as "missing." Five officers were killed and four wounded, and the number of men killed and wounded were 32 and 189 respectively.

In view of the criticism which the despatch of this force aroused, on October 17th a message was published which the First Lord of the Admiralty had conveyed to the Royal Naval Division on their return from Antwerp, and which was to the following effect :

"The First Lord welcomes the Royal Naval

## 176 Heligoland to Keeling Island

Division home on its return from active service. Officers and men of all ranks and ratings have acquitted themselves admirably, and have thoroughly justified the confidence reposed in them. The loss of a portion of the First Brigade through a mistake in no way reflects upon the quality or character of the division.

"The Brigade of Royal Marines throughout the operations sustained fully by their firmness, discipline, and courage, the traditions of the corps. It is not necessary to say more than this.

"The Naval Brigades bore themselves admirably under the artillery fire of the enemy, and it is to be regretted that no opportunities of closer contact with his infantry were afforded them. .

"The dispatch of the Naval Brigades to Antwerp has interrupted for a time the progress of their instruction and training. They were chosen because the need for them was urgent and bitter ; because mobile troops could not be spared for fortress duties ; because they were the nearest, and could be embarked the quickest ; and because their training, although incomplete, was as far advanced as that of a large portion, not only of the forces defending Antwerp, but of the enemy forces attacking.

"The Naval Division was sent to Antwerp not as an isolated incident, but as part of a large operation for the relief of the city. Other and more powerful considerations prevented this from being carried through. The defence of the inner lines of Antwerp could have been maintained for some days ; and the Naval Division only withdrew when ordered to do so in obedience to the general strategic situation, and not on account of any attack or pressure by the enemy.

"The prolongation of the defence due to the arrival of the division enabled the ships in the harbour

## The Naval Brigade at Antwerp 177

to be rendered useless, and many steps of importance to be taken. It is too early now to judge what effect the delaying, even for five or six days, of at least 60,000 Germans before Antwerp may have had upon the fortunes of the general battle to the southward. It was certainly powerful and helpful.

"Apart from the military experiences, which have been invaluable, the division have been the witnesses of the ruthlessness of the German foe towards a small and innocent State. These facts should inspire all ranks to fit themselves in the shortest possible time for further service in the field, not merely as fortress, but as mobile units.

"The Belgian people will never forget that the men of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines were with them in their darkest hour of misery, as, please God, they may also be with them when Belgium is restored to her own by the armies of the Allies."

## CHAPTER X

### EXPLOITS OF NAVAL AIRMEN

**MAGNIFICENT** work has been accomplished by the Royal Naval Air Service. Our naval aviators have been doing yeoman service ever since hostilities commenced, but much of their work has necessarily been of a nature which does not lend itself to detailed description. The following summary of the duties falling to this branch, prepared by Captain Murray Sueter, C.B., the Director of the Naval Air Service, was issued by the Admiralty on October 22nd :

“ During the course of the war the Royal Naval Air Service (Naval Wing of the Royal Flying Corps) has not been idle, airships, aeroplanes, and seaplanes having proved their value in many undertakings.

“ While the Expeditionary Force was being moved abroad a strong patrol to the eastward of the Straits of Dover was undertaken by both seaplanes and airships of the Naval Air Service. The airships remained steadily patrolling between the French and English coasts, sometimes for twelve hours on end ; while further to the east, with the assistance of the Belgian authorities, a temporary seaplane base was established at Ostend, and a patrol kept up with sea-

## Exploits of Naval Airmen 79

planes between this place and the English coast opposite.

"By this means it was impossible for the enemy's ships to approach the Straits without being seen for very many miles. On one occasion, during one of the airship patrols, it became necessary to change a propeller blade of one of the engines. The captain feared it would be necessary to descend for this purpose, but two of the crew immediately volunteered to carry out this difficult task in the air, and climbing out on to the bracket carrying the propeller shafting, they completed the hazardous work of changing the propeller's blade, 2,000 feet above the sea.

"On August 27th, when Ostend was occupied by a force of marines, a strong squadron of aeroplanes, under Wing Commander Samson, complete with all transport and equipment, was also sent over, the aeroplanes flying thither via Dover and Calais.

"Advanced bases had been established some distance inland, and on several occasions skirmishes have taken place between armed motor-car support and bands of Uhlans.

"All these affairs have been successful, with loss to the enemy in killed and prisoners. The Naval armed cars and aeroplanes have also assisted French forces of artillery and infantry on several occasions.

"Commander Samson has performed distinguished services in this work. Captain Williams, R.M.A., is also mentioned as having shown much coolness and capability in a difficult situation.

"Air reconnaissance by the Naval airmen has extended for considerable distances into the enemy's country.

"Squadron Commander Gerrard is in command of a detached squadron of aeroplanes, and his machines



## 180 Heligoland to Keeling Island

have crossed the Rhine and made the attack on Düsseldorf, previously reported.

"Good work has been done in dropping bombs on positions of military importance and railway communications."

It was added that during the course of the actions, enumerated two officers had been slightly wounded, whilst three men were also wounded.

Of exceptional interest was the reference to the aerial patrol which had been maintained eastward of the Straits of Dover while the transports of the Expeditionary Force was crossing the Channel. Thanks to this sky reconnaissance the great flotilla of troopships was able to make the sea passage without molestation by the enemy, who could have made no move without being instantly detected. It is not too much to say that to the skill and efficiency of our naval airmen we owe much of the success which attended the transport of our Army to the Continent, by far the greatest operation of its kind that we had ever undertaken.

On September 23rd came news of a particularly brilliant and daring feat, which was related in the following official statement :

"Yesterday the British aeroplanes of the Naval Wing delivered an attack on the Zeppelin sheds at Düsseldorf.

"Conditions were rendered very difficult by the misty weather, but Flight-Lieutenant C. H. Collett dropped three bombs on the Zeppelin shed, approaching within 400 feet. The extent of the damage done

## Exploits of Naval Airmen 181

is not known. Flight-Lieutenant Collett's machine was struck by one projectile, but all the machines returned safely to their point of departure.

"The importance of this incident lies in the fact that it shows that, in the event of further bombs being dropped into Antwerp or other Belgian towns, measures of reprisal can certainly be adopted if desired to almost any extent."

Some further details of this audacious raid came to hand in due course. The aeroplane squadron, it appears, was divided into two groups, convoyed by automobiles and motorcycles, which prepared revictualling and landing stages. The raid was accomplished under favourable conditions, though the mist which enabled the aviators to fly at a height of 1,000 feet without being perceived made it impossible for them to fulfil their mission to Cologne, and the machines which made the last-named journey were seriously hampered by fog. The expedition to Düsseldorf was more successful. Flying over the Zeppelin sheds at that city the aviators created a panic among the Germans and threw bombs on the sheds, inflicting considerable damage. They discharged all their bombs and then returned in safety, escaping the bullets and shells which whizzed about them from the rifles and anti-aerocraft guns of the startled foe.

Not content with the partial success of this raid, our naval airmen determined to repeat it. The second time their efforts were crowned with complete success. The following official account of this affair was published on October 10th :

## 182 Heligoland to Keeling Island

"Squadron-Commander D. A. Spenser Grey, R.N., reports that, as authorised, he carried out, with Lieutenant R. L. G. Marix and Lieutenant S. V. Sippe, a successful attack on the Düsseldorf airship shed.

"Lieutenant Marix's bombs, dropped from 500 feet, hit the shed, went through the roof, and destroyed a Zeppelin. Flames were observed 500 feet high, the result of igniting the gas of an airship. All three officers are safe, but their aeroplanes have been lost.

"The feat would appear to be in every respect remarkable, having regard to the distance—over 100 miles—penetrated into country held by the enemy, and to the fact that a previous attack had put the enemy on their guard and enabled them to mount anti-aircraft guns."

The achievement was of high military importance. Germany could ill spare a battleship of the air, for she had already suffered some losses, and had not many large rigid dirigibles left, whatever the number she may have had under construction. Moreover, she counted greatly on the advantages which her airships would confer on her. The German people had been led to attach very great importance to the work which the Zeppelins, in particular, would do in the course of the war, and the destruction of one of these vessels, while still in Germany, had a notable effect on the population.

They believed each Zeppelin to be a potential agent of destruction against this country, bridging the North Sea, which confers on us immunity from the horrors of the war that is devastating a large part of Central Europe. Their airships

## Exploits of Naval Airmen 183

they regarded as the antidote to our superior sea-power.

The fact which must have impressed the Germans most of all was that these ambitious and courageous British naval officers had successfully invaded Germany. They had crossed the frontier of the Fatherland. Apart from the injury which they inflicted, their feat proved that Germany was not inviolate. Hence these daring officers produced material and moral results of the highest importance. German papers contained an admission of the panic into which the city of Düsseldorf had been plunged by this aerial raid. The populace clamoured to the Governor for protection against the terrible British bombs, and loud complaints were heard as to the ineffectiveness of the fire which had been directed at the British machines.

In concluding this chapter it may be of interest to give the most authentic figures available respecting the number and variety of the large dirigible airships possessed by Germany. German figures cannot be accepted, because, by presenting alarming statements, they have tried to create a feeling of alarm in England and to impress neutral Powers. Statements based on information which is available on the other side of the Atlantic may, however, be accepted as accurate. The *Scientific American* published details early in the war of all the airships possessed by Germany when the war began—naval, military, and civilian owned, the last named being subsidised and available for war. The particulars are as follows :

# 184 Heligoland to Keeling Island

## NAVAL AIRSHIPS (RIGID TYPE).

Name.	Date.	Displacement in tons.	Length in feet.	Speed in m.p.h.
L 5 (Z) - - -	1914	32.0	550	62
L 4 (S.L.) - -	1914	30.0	550	50
L 3 (Z) - - -	1914	32.0	550	50

## ARMY AIRSHIPS (RIGID TYPE).

Z 8 (Z) - - -	1914	22.0	515	48
Z 7 (Z) - - -	1913	22.0	515	48
Z 6 (Z) - - -	1913	19.5	465	48
Z 5 (Z) - - -	1913	19.5	465	48
L 4 (Z) - - -	1913	19.5	465	48
Z 1 (Z) - - -	1913	19.5	465	48
Z 3 (Z) - - -	1912	17.5	462	49
Z 2 (Z) - - -	1911	17.8	485	48
S.-L. 1 (S.-L.) -	1909-12	19.0	430	46
S.-L. 2 (S.-L.) -	1914	23.0	475	50

## PASSENGER AIRSHIPS (RIGID TYPE).

Sachsen (Z) -	1913	19.5	465	48
Hansa (Z) -	1912	18.7	485	50
Viktoría Luise (Z)	1912	18.7	485	48

## OTHER AIRSHIPS (ARMY).

The P. airships are non-rigid and the M. airships semi-rigid in the following Table:—

# Exploits of Naval Airmen 185

Name.	Date.	Displace- ment in tons.	Length in feet.	Speed in m.p.h.
P 4 (B) - -	1914	11	280	47
P 3 (P) - -	1911	10	280	40
P 2 (Ersatz) (P) •	1910	8	254	32
M 4 (G) • - -	1913	13	320	47
M 1 (G) - -	1912	6	245	28

Z = Zeppelin ; S.-L. = Schutte-Lanz ; P = Parseval ; G = Gross.

## CHAPTER XI

### BRITISH NAVY V. GERMAN ARMY

THE latter part of October witnessed an almost superhuman attempt by the Germans to make themselves masters of the seaports of Northern France. Acting, it is said, on the personal and urgent orders of the Kaiser himself, his generals concentrated huge masses of men and an enormous force of artillery, and then began a forward movement which was intended to bring Dunkirk, Calais, Boulogne, and other points on the coast under German dominion.

The Allies were equally determined to circumvent this design. Reinforcements were hurried to the scene, and the German rush was stemmed. The fighting was extraordinarily fierce. Day after day the battle swayed to and fro. At one point the Germans would gain ground, at another they would be hurled back in confusion. But with dogged tenacity they continued to struggle towards their goal. The German people were told that this was a life and death grapple. Everything depended on the result, since it was absolutely vital to German plans that Calais should be captured. It has never been explained why this should be the case, and it is fairly well understood that the scheme was mainly specta-

## British Navy v. German Army 187

cular in nature, having been undertaken in order to inspire the German nation with the thought that their soldiers would soon be gazing on the white cliffs of hated England. Calais, they were told, was the next stage towards the invasion of this country. Once the German Army had entered into possession, batteries of enormous guns were to be mounted to sweep the Straits of Dover, and under cover of these terrible weapons the German transports would cross to the shores of England.

These fairy tales no doubt had a heartening effect on public opinion in the Fatherland. All eyes were turned on the "Battle of the Road to Calais," as it was styled in the German newspapers. In due course the enemy's troops advanced to the coast, and soon their trenches were being dug in full sight of the sea. It was then they received the biggest surprise of their lives.

What happened was briefly told in the following announcement published on October 23rd :

- "On the 18th instant requests for naval assistance were made to the Admiralty by the Allied commanders.
- "In consequence a naval flotilla mounting a large number of powerful long-range guns came into action at daybreak on the 19th off the Belgian coast, supporting the left of the Belgian army, and firing against the right of the German attack, which they were by their position able to enfilade. The Germans replied by shells from their heavy guns, but owing to the superior range of the British marine artillery practically no damage has been done.

"The three monitors, which were building in



## 188 Heligoland to Keeling Island

British ports for Brazil and were acquired on the outbreak of war, have proved particularly well suited to this class of operation. A heavy bombardment of the German flank has been maintained without intermission since the morning of the 19th, and is being continued to-day. Observation is arranged from the shore by means of naval balloons, and all reports indicate that substantial losses have been inflicted upon the enemy, and that the fire is well directed and effective against his batteries and heavy guns.

"Yesterday (Wednesday), a considerable explosion probably of an ammunition wagon, followed upon a naval shot. The naval losses have so far been very small considering the damage done and the important assistance rendered to the Belgian left flank. All reports received by the Admiralty show the courage and determination with which the Belgian army, animated by the King in person, is defending the last few miles of Belgian soil.

"The naval operations are under the command of Rear-Admiral the Hon. Horace L. A. Hood, C.B., M.V.O., D.S.O.

From that date onward bulletins were periodically issued with regard to the work of the "bombarding flotilla." Day after day the powerful naval guns out at sea hurled shot and shell into the crowded German trenches, causing terrible havoc and often driving out the occupants in headlong flight. In every previous land engagement the advantage in heavy artillery had been on the side of the Germans, but in this coastal battle the superiority was for once on the Allies' side.

The effect of their fire on the German position

## British Navy v. German Army 189

was described by Mr. Granville Fortescue, in a despatch published in *The Daily Telegraph* on October 21st :

" To-day," he said, " I saw a little detachment with a machine gun which had dug itself in across the road, and every face of the men of that detachment showed lines of determination that brooded no good for the enemy. Coming along the road I had sighted a certain number of British warships. With my glass I could make out the long slender barrels of the guns. These ships I knew could come within 200 yards of the shore, and from such a point they could rake the land 6 miles back from the coast. It was a simple matter for the ships to drop their heavy shells into the rear of the Germans. For even the staunchest troops this is a disconcerting experience.

" Suddenly a deep boom sounded across the water. Then a ball of white smoke rose and hovered a moment above the decks. The whistle of a shell cut through the air. Another boom came as an echo to the first, and a shell burst fair among the enemy. ' Lovie ' and ' Slype ' were the targets of the gunners. There is a sort of block-house near the first village that the enemy had occupied. This point received special attention. After the ships' batteries had searched the country south of Middlekirk for some time, the order was given for the infantry to move forward.

" As with one impulse the men sprang from the trenches, and crept forward on the invader. The rattle of the machine gun supplemented the noise of the naval guns. Then the field artillery added to the chorus. But all this noise could not drown the irregular rat-tat-tat of the infantry. The country here is flat, and criss-crossed by a most complicated system of canals.

" It is plain to be seen that the Germans did not

## 190 Heligoland to Keeling Island

relish the shells of the warships dropping in their rear. Now actually caught between two fires, their line began to waver. As the determined infantry pressed onward, slowly the enemy gave way. It became apparent that they were not present in as great numbers as had been first reported. The cannonading from the sea increased. The infantry fire redoubled. The whole German line resting on the sea was now in full retreat."

Some surprise was occasioned by the allusion in the first official announcement to the "monitors" which were taking part in the bombardment. Few people had previously known of the existence of these three vessels, which had been built by Messrs. Vickers for the Brazilian Government, under the names of "Javary," "Madeira," and "Solimoes." At the outbreak of war they were purchased by the British Government and respectively named "Humber," "Mersey," and "Severn." They were built after designs prepared by Mr. T. G. Owens, the director of construction to Messrs. Vickers (Limited). Events have shown that the purchase was a singularly sagacious move, and that it was a very wise head which triumphed over all the technical difficulties which the requirements of the Brazilians—who ordered them originally—presented.

They are vessels of extraordinary efficiency. They cost probably not much more than three large destroyers—say £150,000 each. Consider the return for this outlay! Each monitor displaces about 1,250 tons, and is so flat, drawing only 4½ feet of water, that she can go right into shoal water and fire. About one-third of

## British Navy v. German Army 191

the displacement is represented by her armour ; in other words, she carries just over 400 tons of protective material, defending her sides and her guns. She mounts, moreover, an armament of two 6-inch guns with a 100-lb. shell, two howitzers with a 45-lb. shell, four 3-pounders, and six rifle calibre guns. When she comes across an enemy ship—or a German trench near the sea for that matter, as we know—she can discharge every minute one and a half ton of metal ; one and a half ton—no less.

Nor is this all. She has a speed of  $11\frac{1}{2}$  knots and carries sufficient coal to enable her to travel 4,000 miles at an economical rate of steaming ; she could go, in other words, from Dover to New York and still have some fuel in hand. If oil instead of coal were employed—supposing the Admiralty were ordering more of them—then the speed could be increased and the radius of action raised probably by about 50 per cent., enabling her to go to New York from Queens-town and back again.

These remarkable ships were, of course, built for service on quiet rivers. It was never imagined that they would traverse the sea more than once—on their way to Brazil. Yet here we had them on the eve of winter operating in one of the most choppy seas and holding their own. Those who were present at the trials were not surprised by this success, though others may have been. When one of them was being tested the water was so rough that 5,000-ton merchant vessels had to seek shelter ; the monitor, built for river work, held her own.

## 192 Heligoland to Keeling Island

These ships defied the enemy's submarines. Their immunity under attack was no doubt due to a technical difficulty which baulked the enemy. As a rule his torpedoes are set to run about 12 feet below the surface; the monitors are submerged only  $4\frac{1}{2}$  feet, and consequently the ten torpedoes fired passed under them without doing any damage. Of course, the immunity is not complete; torpedoes can be made to run at almost any depth. But it takes time, when they are adjusted to one depth, to change over to another.

Gradually the strength of the bombarding flotilla was augmented. Beside the three powerful monitors, several old cruisers, gunboats, and destroyers were added. Obsolete vessels were specially selected for the work, in view of the grave risks which the flotilla inevitably ran from the enemy's heavy artillery, and particularly from his marauding submarines. We have already seen that the cruiser "Hermes" was torpedoed in the Straits of Dover, an incident which strikingly demonstrated the enterprise and daring of the German submarine commanders.

The following statement given out by the Admiralty on October 24th, well describes the conditions under which the naval operations were conducted :

"All yesterday the monitors and other vessels of the British bombarding flotilla fired on the German right, which they searched thoroughly and effectively, in concert with the operations of the Belgian army. All German attacks on Nieuport were repulsed.

"Much damage was done to the enemy by naval

## British Navy v. German Army 190

fire, which enfilades the German line, and enemy's prisoners taken yesterday and the day before testify to the heavy losses they have suffered from this cause. Fire was also opened in the afternoon on the German batteries near Ostend.

"Admiral Hood now has a fine flotilla of vessels very suitable for this work, but at the same time not of great naval value. During the day our ships were persistently attacked by an enemy's submarine, and torpedoes were fired without success at 'Wildfire' and 'Myrmidon.' Other British vessels again attacked the submarine. The naval aeroplanes and balloons aided in the direction of the fire."

No effort was spared by the enemy to drive off our ships, the fire from which was principally responsible for the failure of the whole German advance along the coast. The flotilla, as is mentioned in the foregoing statement, was repeatedly assailed by German submarines, and whole batteries of the heaviest guns obtainable were brought down to the shore to play upon the British ships. But all these efforts were in vain. The crushing cannonade from the sea could not be silenced, and the Germans had no alternative but to abandon those positions which were within range of Admiral Hood's guns.

On October 27th the flotilla received a notable reinforcement in the shape of H.M.S. "Venerable," a 15,000-ton battleship carrying four 12-inch guns, besides twelve 6-inch quick-firers. The arrival of this ship meant that the enemy was subjected to a bombardment by projectiles weighing 850 lbs, filled with a heavy charge of deadly lyddite. The "Venerable" could fire

## 194 Heligoland to Keeling Island

four such shells in less than one minute, while her 6-inch quick-firers were pouring in 100-lb. projectiles as fast as the guns could be worked. Moreover the 12-inch guns had a range greatly in excess even of the much-vaunted giant howitzers of the enemy.

The fire from the "Venerable" must have inflicted terrible losses in the German trenches. Now and then the 12-inch guns would find the range of a German battery, and annihilate it at one salvo. The gunlayers of all the British ships engaged are reported by eye-witnesses to have excelled themselves. The ranges were at once picked up with marvellous precision, and the Germans as a result were compelled to evacuate a large extent of the country after suffering terrible losses.

The monitors and torpedo craft frequently, by steaming up rivers and canals, got to such close quarters that their crews even exchanged rifle-shots with the Germans. Later on the enemy brought up every gun he could spare and concentrated their fire against the ships, but the speed and skilful manœuvring of the latter resulted in their sustaining very little damage.

On October 29th the Admiralty, reporting on the work of the flotilla, said that accounts received from the shore testified to the effect and accuracy of the fire, and to its galling character. "The flank is thus thoroughly maintained." On the 27th and 28th the enemy replied vigorously to the fire of Admiral Hood's ships, but the vessels received only trifling

## British Navy v. German Army 195

structural damage. On the 29th the opposition from the shore had practically ceased, and the preponderance of naval gunnery seemed to be established.

The casualties were very slight throughout, but one shell exploded on the destroyer "Falcon," killed one officer and eight men, and wounded one officer and fifteen men. The "Brilliant," an old cruiser, also had a few casualties, as did the "Rinaldo," an obsolete gunboat. These losses, however, bore no reasonable proportion whatever to those which all accounts agree were inflicted on the enemy by the naval bombardment. A conservative estimate put the German casualties during the first four days of the sea bombardment at 1,600 in killed alone.

At the same time the action of the Fleet had the direct result of holding up the German advance along the coast. Without the co-operation of the naval guns the Allies would have been hard pressed in this quarter. As it was, the arrival of the ships brought to bear an overwhelming artillery fire at the very point where it was most needed, and there is every reason to believe that the German plan of seizing Dunkirk and Calais has now been finally frustrated.

Balked for the time being of its legitimate prey—for the German High Seas Fleet still refused to come out and fight—the British Navy welcomed the opportunity of throwing a portion of its weight into the balance of the land campaign, with such promising results.



## 198 Heligoland to Keeling Island

It is an old saying that the British Navy can "go anywhere and do anything." The operations on the Belgian coast put an almost literal interpretation on that phrase.

## CHAPTER XII

### SWEEPING THE SEAS

IN spite of the absence of any very spectacular occurrence in the naval theatre after the fight off Heligoland, signs were not wanting that the British Fleet was playing its part in the crushing of Germany almost as effectively as though it had met and routed the German Battle Fleet in a general engagement. German shipping had practically disappeared from the face of the waters. The enemy's ports were idle, every wharf and every berth being crowded with great ocean ships which dared not leave. Although at the end of the first three months of war it was too early to speak of a food crisis or an economic collapse, there was ample evidence of the distress prevailing in Germany as a direct consequence of the British Navy's strangle hold.

• To a much greater extent than Germany are we dependent on ocean-borne supplies. When, in spite of that fact, we found that food continued to be abundant in the United Kingdom and scarce in Germany, we began to realise the inner meaning of that much-abused term, the command of the sea. Never before had the British public understood the dominant part which the Navy plays in our daily life. Tennyson's phrase, "The

## 198 Heligoland to Keeling Island

Fleet of England is her all in all," was surely inspired, since it exactly expresses the relation in which the Navy stands to the national weal.

Early in September the Grand Fleet, which had remained quietly on the alert at its appointed stations since the brilliant dash into the Bight of Heligoland, hoping against hope for the appearance on the horizon of Admiral von Ingenohl's Dreadnoughts coming forth to accept battle, saw fit once more to demonstrate its absolute and undisputed command of the North Sea, formerly miscalled the "German Ocean."

On September 10th the Admiralty communicated the following :

"Yesterday and to-day strong and numerous squadrons and flotillas have made a complete sweep of the North Sea up to and into the Heligoland Bight. The German fleet made no attempt to interfere with our movements, and no German ship of any kind was seen at sea."

It was easy to read between the lines of this laconic announcement the certain fact that another hazardous operation had been carried out with great skill and splendid courage, though, as luck would have it, the results were negative. Into the death-strewn waters of Heligoland Bight our squadrons and flotillas had penetrated once more, and once more the German Fleet had declined what was clearly intended as a deliberate challenge.

The average layman can form no true conception of the manifold difficulties and perils which must have attended the operation. A "complete

sweep" of the North Sea may sound simple enough, but reference to the map will dispel the popular delusion that the North Sea is a glorified lake which can be "swept" from end to end in the course of a single day. Plans governing the exact movements of every unit in the participating squadrons and flotillas had to be prepared, in order to avoid perilous mistakes which might have arisen unless the entire force were under perfect control. It is probable that throughout the two days the commanding and other responsible officers of every vessel had to remain constantly at their posts, for contact with the enemy might come about at any moment. The strain on the men must have been almost equally great. At any moment hostile torpedo-boats or submarines might make their presence unpleasantly felt, a contingency which demanded that every gun should be kept fully manned and instantly ready to open fire. Finally there was the ever-present menace of the mine. That, in spite of all these dangers the vast sweeping movement should have been carried out without untoward incident is another tribute to the incomparable seamanship and the hardihood of all concerned.

This second refusal of the German Fleet to emerge from its shelter and accept battle quite naturally gave rise to a popular impression that its fighting spirit was of no very high order. In justice to the Germans, however, we have to remember the awkward position in which their Fleet has been placed. Germany has two sea frontiers to guard, the one on the North Sea, the other on

## 200 Heligoland to Keeling Island

the Baltic. To concentrate at one point would be to denude the other of effective defence and lay it open to attack. In the Baltic the Russian Fleet was still "in being" and very much on the alert, as the sinking of the German cruiser "Magdeburg" had testified. Though small in numbers, this Fleet was powerful enough to make itself felt, and there is reason to believe that the Germans found it necessary to keep eight or ten of their older battleships in the Baltic to "contain" the Russian squadron. Had the latter been able to defeat the German Fleet in those waters and to secure command of the Eastern area of the Baltic for a few days, the Russians would probably have seized the opportunity to land an army on the German coast, little more than 100 miles north of Berlin itself. Such a move must have played havoc with the whole German scheme of land strategy, and might well have proved decisive. Germany dared not run any such risk, and consequently had no option but to keep a considerable portion of her effective fighting fleet constantly in the Baltic. By so much, therefore, was her fleet in the North Sea weakened, and considering the marked numerical superiority of our own force, under Admiral Sir John Jellicoe, the German Admiral had ample excuse for declining to accept our challenge until he was able to put every available unit in his battle line.

From time to time, however, German vessels, particularly submarines, ventured out into the North Sea for an airing, and our ships were constantly on the watch for a chance of picking up

such adventurous craft. Shortly after the fall of Antwerp the enemy's small craft gave increased signs of activity. It has been surmised that a movement was on foot to station a force of German torpedo boats at Antwerp, in spite of the breach of Dutch neutrality which the passage of warships up the Scheldt would imply. But to gain the Belgian port they had to run the gauntlet of our patrols in the southern area of the North Sea, and on at least one occasion the adventurous enemy came completely to grief.

The bare facts of the affair were given in an Admiralty announcement on October 17th, as follows :

"The new light cruiser 'Undaunted,' (Captain Cecil H. Fox), accompanied by the destroyers 'Lance' (Commander W. de M. Egerton), 'Lennox' (Lieut.-Commander C. F. Dane), 'Legion' (Lieut.-Commander C. F. Allsup), and 'Loyal' (Lieut.-Commander F. Burges Watson), engaged four German destroyers off the Dutch coast this afternoon. All the enemy's destroyers were sunk."

A later message added that the British loss in the action was one officer and four men wounded, that the damage to the British destroyers was slight, and that thirty-one German survivors had been picked up and made prisoners of war.

The news of this highly successful affair was the more welcome because it came a day or two after the disaster to the cruiser "Hawke," which is chronicled in a former chapter. Moreover, by a piquant coincidence, the hero of the engagement was Captain Cecil H. Fox, of the "Undaunted,"

## 202 Heligoland to Keeling Island

who, it will be remembered, was in command of the "Amphion" when, after sinking the German minelayer "Königin Luise," she herself was destroyed by a mine. Thus the Navy felt that the "Amphion" had been well avenged, and Captain Fox and his colleagues received the heartiest congratulations on their fine achievement.

The completeness of the victory was incontestable. Of the German destroyer division, not a unit survived. It was annihilation rather than victory, a result entirely in accordance with the fighting traditions of the British Navy. The light cruiser "Undaunted," which led the British destroyers into action, had been completed only about a week or two previously. She is a sister to the "Arethusa," the ship which covered herself with glory at the battle of Heligoland. The "Lance," "Lennox," "Legion," and "Loyal" all belong to the "L" class of destroyers, representatives of which also did such splendid work in the same engagement.

No official narrative of this latest action is available to date, but the story has been fully told by men from the ships which took part. The "Undaunted" and her four attendant destroyers sighted a division of German destroyers off the mouth of the Scheldt shortly after mid-day on October 17th. Finding themselves discovered, the enemy's boats put on full speed, and did their best to escape. They were identified later as the S 115, S 117, S 118, and S 119, Schichau-built boats of 420 tons, with a speed of 26 knots. Each was armed with three 4-pounder

## Sweeping the Seas

quick-firers, two machine-guns, and three torpedo tubes, the crew consisting of sixty officers and men.

The British ships soon demonstrated their superior speed by steadily reducing the distance between them and their prey. Finding their retreat cut off, the German boats turned on their pursuers and opened a brisk fire. The distance was said to have been four miles, and it was at this range that the guns of the "Undaunted" and her consorts opened upon the doomed quartet. A few moments after the cannonade had begun the leading German boat was seen to be in distress. Clouds of débris and smoke rose from her as the British lyddite shells struck home and exploded, rending the thin steel plating of the hull like brown paper, amidst a shower of death-dealing splinters. One shell smashed the machinery and brought the boat to a standstill. An instant later she was simply driven to the bottom by the concentrated fire of the British ships, and a few survivors were left struggling in the water.

But until the other three boats had been disposed of the British squadron could not stop to pick up these unfortunate men. In rapid succession a second and third destroyer succumbed to the deadly fire of our ships, which, in spite of the great speed at which they were travelling, scored a remarkably high percentage of hits on the small, low-lying, and swiftly moving targets. It was a fine exhibition of gunnery, and one which testified to the magnificent training and coolness of our seamen. At last



## 204 Heligoland to Keeling Island

the fourth destroyer shared the fate of the others, and the German division had been simply wiped out. From beginning to end the action had lasted scarcely ninety minutes, at the end of which the German Navy was poorer by the loss of four useful destroyers and about 250 officers and men, including the thirty-one survivors who were rescued after the action.

The British casualties, on the other hand, were remarkably slight. One officer and four men were wounded, while the damage to the ships was insignificant. A member of the crew of one of the destroyers engaged in the fight told his story with all the modesty of a true sailor :

"The 'Undaunted,' he said, 'led us into action. We closed round, and had a nice little game.' One of our destroyers fired two shots at one of the enemy's ships, set her on fire, and then left her. Another destroyer engaged one of the enemy with the same result.

"The other two Germans showed a bit of a fight, but it was only a bit, and we could dodge their shots with ease. The whole fight lasted only a little over an hour. It was really pretty to watch our men fire. They got on the target every time, and you could see bits of the enemy's ships blown away as the shots struck. The prisoners picked up were wearing all kinds of clothing ; they appeared to have no regulation dress."

He went on to say that as soon as our squadron came within range the engagement developed into a running fight, in the course of which the superiority of the British ships, both in speed and in gunnery, was soon demonstrated. The

rivals pounded away at each other for some time, but in the end the superior range and weight of our guns told its tale.

In the course of the fight the "Loyal" was hit almost exactly in the middle of the stern, about four feet above the water-line, by a shell which ploughed its way into the interior of the ship. It made a hole some four inches in diameter. Another shell swept across her deck and took off the right foot of a lieutenant who was working the after gun. An able seaman was killed and another was wounded. The bridge, on which Lieut.-Commander Burges Watson was on duty throughout the action, was untouched, and, save for the hole in the stern, the destroyer showed few signs of having been in action.

The promptness with which these four German destroyers had been rounded up and dispatched proved how efficiently the British patrol of the North Sea was maintained. Day and night, without intermission and regardless of weather conditions, the watch was kept, for the most part by small torpedo-craft, which are not remarkable for the spaciousness or comfort of their living accommodation. Many stories bore witness to the hardships and perils encountered by our men during the bad weather and incidentally to the stoutness of our warships. For the first five weeks of the war, the Grand Fleet was able to undertake the arduous duties assigned to it under conditions as good as any sailor could desire. Fog was the only drawback, and even that was not so troublesome as is sometimes the case. But the third week in September brought with

## 206 Heligoland to Keeling Island

it a succession of violent gales, and for many days our ships had a practically continuous buffeting. Patrol work carried on with such unceasing vigilance was performed at the cost of great personal discomfort, especially to those on board the lighter craft. Life aboard a destroyer is never a bed of roses. When the elements are unkind it tests the temper and endurance of the most experienced sailor. Happily, thanks to splendid seamanship and the excellent quality of British shipbuilding, the mosquito craft weathered the gales without serious mishap.

Simple facts such as these serve to remind us once more of the debt we owe to our sailors, who maintain their vigilant guard over the homes of the nation under circumstances of constant peril, not merely from the enemy's ships but from the elements themselves. This patrol work is perhaps the supreme test of seamanship, and the first few months of the war have shown unmistakably that the very qualities of unflinching determination and consummate skill which raised British seamen in the past to pre-eminence are just as much in evidence to-day among the officers and men of the Grand Fleet.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE ACTION IN THE PACIFIC

ON November 5th the Admiralty announced sad news. The naval authorities had no information, except such as came from German sources—apparently the wireless service issued to a world which would otherwise be in ignorance of the feats of German arms ashore and afloat. But the Germans claimed that a naval action had been fought off the Chilian coast with the result that the armoured cruiser "Monmouth" had been sunk, and her consort, the "Good Hope"—flagship of Rear-Admiral Sir Christopher Cradock—"very severely damaged." The Admiralty announced that they "could not accept these facts as accurate at the present time, for the battleship 'Canopus,' which had been specially sent to strengthen Admiral Cradock's squadron and would have given him a decided superiority, is not mentioned in them; and further, although five German ships concentrated in Chilian waters, only three have come into Valparaiso harbour."

For two days the mystery of this reported action continued unsolved. The Admiralty then issued a further statement which, it was apparent, was an incomplete reflection of events, and it was not

## 208 Heligoland to Keeling Island

until November 18th that a full report was published, consisting of a log prepared by Captain John Luce, in command of the cruiser "Glasgow," one of the ships under Admiral Cradock's command. This statement was as follows:

" 'Glasgow' left Coronel 9 a.m. on November 1st to rejoin 'Good Hope' (flagship), 'Monmouth,' and 'Otranto' at rendezvous.

" At 2 p.m. flagship signalled that apparently from wireless calls there was an enemy ship to northward.

" Orders were given for squadron to spread north-east by east in the following order: 'Good Hope,' 'Monmouth,' 'Otranto,' and 'Glasgow,' speed to be worked up to 15 knots.

" 4.20 p.m. saw smoke; proved to be enemy's ships, one small cruiser and two armoured cruisers. 'Glasgow' reported to Admiral, ships in sight were warned, and all concentrated on 'Good Hope.'

" At 5 p.m. 'Good Hope' was sighted.

" 5.47 p.m. squadron formed in line-ahead in following order: 'Good Hope,' 'Monmouth,' 'Glasgow,' 'Otranto.'

" Enemy, who had turned south, were now in single line-ahead 12 miles off, 'Scharnhorst' and 'Gneisenau' leading.

" 6.18 p.m.—Speed ordered to 17 knots, and flagship signalled 'Canopus': 'I am going to attack enemy now.'

" Enemy were now 15,000 yards away, and maintained this range, at the same time jamming wireless signals.

" By this time sun was setting immediately behind us from enemy position, and while it remained above horizon we had advantage in light, but range too great.

" 6.55 p.m.—Sun set and visibility conditions

## The Action in the Pacific 209

altered, our ships being silhouetted against afterglow, and failing light made enemy difficult to see.

" 7.3 p.m.—Enemy opened fire 12,000 yards, followed in quick succession by 'Good Hope,' 'Monmouth,' 'Glasgow.'

" Two squadrons were now converging, and each ship engaged opposite number in the line. Growing darkness and heavy spray of head sea made firing difficult, particularly for main deck guns of 'Good Hope' and 'Monmouth.'

" Enemy firing salvos got range quickly, and their third salvo caused fire to break out on fore-part of both ships, which were constantly on fire till 7.45 p.m.

" 7.50 p.m.—Immense explosion occurred on 'Good Hope' amidships, flames reaching 200 feet high. Total destruction must have followed. It was now quite dark.

" Both sides continued firing at flashes of opposing guns. 'Monmouth' was badly down by the bow, and turned away to get stern to sea, signalling 'Glasgow' to that effect.

" 8.30 p.m.—'Glasgow' signalled to 'Monmouth' 'Enemy following us,' but received no reply.

" Under rising moon enemy's ships were now seen approaching, and as 'Glasgow' could render 'Monmouth' no assistance she proceeded at full speed to avoid destruction.

" 8.50 p.m.—Lost sight of enemy.

" 9.20 p.m.—Observed seventy-five flashes of fire, which was, no doubt, final attack on 'Monmouth.'

" Nothing could have been more admirable than conduct of officers and men throughout. Though it was most trying to receive great volume of fire without chance of returning it adequately, all kept perfectly cool, there was no wild firing, and discipline was the same as at battle practice.

## 210 Heligoland to Keeling Island

"When target ceased to be visible, gunlayers spontaneously ceased fire.

"The serious reverse sustained has entirely failed to impair the spirit of officers and ship's company, and it is our unanimous wish to meet the enemy again as soon as possible."

What of the ships which took part in this action? It is, perhaps, well to set out the two squadrons separate and distinct;

### BRITISH

The "Monmouth" was an armoured cruiser belonging to the "County" class. She was laid down at Glasgow in August, 1899, and completed for sea in 1903. Her displacement was 9,800 tons. Engines of 22,000 h.p. gave her a speed of 23 knots, which was frequently exceeded in service. Although she was designed and built as an armoured cruiser, the armoured protection was very slight. The thickness of the belt over vital parts was only 4 inches. She was armed with fourteen 6-inch, eight 12-pounder, and three 3-pounder guns, and had two submerged torpedo tubes. The complement numbered about 540 officers and men.

The "Good Hope" was an armoured cruiser, displacing 14,100 tons. She was built by the Fairfield Company, and completed in 1902. A speed of nearly 24 knots was achieved on trial. The armament consisted of two 9.2-inch guns, in single turrets at the bow and stern, sixteen 6-inch guns in casemates, twelve 12-pounders,

## The Action in the Pacific 211

and some smaller weapons, in addition to two submerged torpedo tubes.

The "Glasgow" is a light cruiser of 4,800 tons, launched at the Fairfield Yard in 1909. Her speed on trial was upwards of  $26\frac{1}{2}$  knots. She is armed with two 6-inch, ten 4-inch, and five smaller guns, and has two submerged torpedo tubes.

The "Otranto," the auxiliary vessel mentioned in the accounts of the battle, is one of the armed merchant vessels commissioned by the Admiralty for war service. She belongs to the Orient Steam Navigation Company, and was launched in 1909. Her tonnage is 12,124, and she is driven by turbines at a speed of 18 knots.

### GERMAN

The "Scharnhorst" and "Gneisenau" are sister ships, identical in every respect. Both were launched in 1906, and completed for sea in the following year. The displacement is 11,600 tons, and the designed speed  $22\frac{1}{2}$  knots. For the displacement the armament is distinctly powerful. It comprises eight 8·2-inch, six 5·9-inch, and fourteen 24-pounder guns, with four submerged torpedo tubes. The 8·2-inch guns fire a projectile of 275-lb. weight.

The light cruiser which took part in the action—for there was apparently only one present, and not three as at first reported—would have an armament consisting of ten 4·1-inch guns, two machine-guns, and two submerged torpedo tubes



## 212 Heligoland to Keeling Island

for all the German light cruisers carry the same number and type of guns.

These were the ships which were engaged off the Chilian coast on this Sunday afternoon. As the First Lord has observed, the material is not available for "a true judgment of the episode." But, on the other hand, it is now possible to reconstruct the scene.

The "Good Hope," flagship of Admiral Cradock, the "Monmouth"—both armoured cruisers—the "Glasgow," a scout cruiser, and the auxiliary ship "Otranto"—of little fighting value—were in company at two o'clock on the afternoon of November 1st, when the "Good Hope" picked up wireless signals, which indicated that "there was an enemy's ship to the northward." This may have been a purposely sent out message with the intention of giving the impression that there was one German ship and no more. Admiral Cradock may have been deceived. At any rate, he directed that the squadron should spread north-east by east, the ships gradually working up to a speed of 15 knots—about two-thirds their full speed.

Rather over two hours later—at 4.20—smoke was seen. "The enemy's ship" proved to be "enemy's ships—one small cruiser and two armoured cruisers." The British vessels then proceeded to concentrate on the "Good Hope." By this time the strength of the Germans must have been known, because the "Scharnhorst" and "Gneisenau" were the only armoured cruisers at large, and the character of the smaller vessel was unimportant, since all the scout

## The Action in the Pacific 213

cruisers of the German Navy carry the same armament at large. The British officers would be aware, therefore, that the two big ships had a broadside of twelve 8·2-inch guns—very powerful weapons—whereas they possessed only two 9·2-inch guns of an old pattern, apart from 6-inch weapons.

By 5.47 the enemy, who had turned south, was seen to be in single line ahead 12 miles off. Admiral Cradock had to decide whether, with inferior force, he would seek an action or endeavour to avoid it—if he could—for his squadron was slower than the German vessels. He may have under-estimated the force opposed to him; he may have decided that an action could not be avoided. At any rate, he increased speed to 17 knots and signalled, of course by wireless, to the battleship "Canopus," "I am going to attack enemy." He determined not to fall back on the battleship, with her four 12-inch guns in two turrets and twelve 6-inch guns in armoured casemates, nor did he call her up. This vessel is seventeen years old, and her speed cannot be more than about 16 knots. The speed of a squadron is that of its slowest ship. The Admiral was evidently anxious that the enemy should not escape him, and the day was already far spent.

Whether it would have been possible to delay action so that the "Canopus" might join the flag, we do not know. It is stated that a signal was sent to the battleship, but the captain of the "Glasgow" also adds that the Germans were "jamming wireless signals"—just as in a crowded room some persons by chattering can make a

## 214 Heligoland to Keeling Island

speaker's voice inaudible—which suggests that Admiral Cradock's message was not received.

This was the situation at eighteen minutes past six o'clock. We are told further three important facts :

• First, "the sun was setting immediately behind us from enemy position."

Second, "while it remained above horizon we had advantage in light."

Third, "the range was too great" for the British vessels to open fire effectively.

While they had, or thought they had, the benefit of the light they could not fire, because their guns were not sufficiently powerful. When the sun had sunk, and the British vessels could have brought their guns into action, because the range was shorter, not only was the light gone for them, but the advantage of visibility had been transferred to the enemy, "our ships," we learn, "being silhouetted against afterglow." Anyone who has looked from the flagstaff on Hampstead Heath when the sun has set behind the church at Harrow will appreciate what the conditions were like. The British vessels must have stood out in relief, sharp and clear, while the opposing squadron, in the failing light, was "difficult to see."

Nor does this complete our information. Evidently the action took place in what amounted almost to a gale. It is stated that "there was a strong wind," that the sea "was considerable," and that the "heavy spray of head sea made

## The Action in the Pacific 215

ring difficult, particularly for main guns of 'Good Hope' and 'Monmouth,' " both of them badly-designed vessels.

Thus the action opened at a range of 12,000 yards, every advantage being with the enemy, who had more guns, better guns, and better-disposed guns, and, moreover, carried more armour. We are not told in what manner the British ships used their guns, but it is reported that the Germans "fired in salvos," and "got the range quickly." In a gale they fought scientifically, as at battle practice, instead of each gun firing independently. Three salvos hit the two big British ships on fire; the action must have been over, to all intents and purposes, about 200 seconds. Think of it; and the range was 7 miles—about as far as from Ealing Common to Charing Cross! It was a case of hitting first, hitting hard, and keeping on hitting. Thus the "Good Hope" and "Monmouth" were lost.

It was hardly necessary to tell us that "nothing could have been more admirable than the conduct of officers and men," when they received a "great volume of fire without chance of returning it equately." Even the foe admits that they fought "heroically." We now have evidence that they fought not against odds, but against the odds. Let it be added that Admiral Lock was an officer of a fine school—a keen polo-player and sportsman, and instinct with the best traditions of the service, as those who knew him, or have read his breezy volume of "Whispers from the Fleet," always recognised.

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